

RESTRICTED APR 9 1947

28 March 1947

TO: FHM for SC, Washington
FROM: SC, AMZON
SUBJECT: CI-SR 36 - Adolf HITLER

1) Attached herewith for your information and retention is subject report.

2) For Berlin: The copy attached herewith is transmitted for your perusal. Since it is our file copy, we request that it be returned at your convenience.

Distributions:

- ✓ 2 - SC, Washington (Attach)
- 1 - SC, Berlin (Attach)
- 1 - Registry
- 1 - SC Cps

Army

Job 76-789R
Box 49

Confidential

~~RESTRICTED~~

Job 76-789R
Box 49

FOR COORDINATION WITH US Army

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

RESTRICTED

OT 72/36
March 1947

1222

APR 9 1947

HEADQUARTERS
7707 MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE CENTER
APO 757 US ARMY

OI SPECIAL REPORT 36

ADOLF HITLER: A COMPOSITE PICTURE

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
INTRODUCTION	2
SOURCES	2
REPORT	3
1. Blaschke: Personal Traits	3
2. Brandt: Report on Hitler	4
3. Brueckner: Miscellaneous Remarks	7
4. Tberstein: Women Around Hitler	8
5. Giesing: Report on Hitler	10
a. Preliminary Description	10
b. Medical Observations	11
c. Hitler and His Entourage	16
d. Hitler and the War	18
6. Hasselbach: Hitler	20
a. Knowledge and Mental Capacity	20
b. Entourage	22
c. Religion	23
d. The Arts	25
e. Family Relations	27
f. Eva Braun	27
7. Heusinger: Hitler as a Military Leader	29
8. Lipbert: Impressions of Hitler	34
9. Riecke: Hitler and Agriculture	35
10. Schmidt: Hitler and Foreign Visitors	36
11. Schwerin: My Personal Impression of Hitler	38
12. Schwerin von Krosigk: Hitler	40
a. Appearance and Manner	40
b. Intellectual Ability	40
c. Effect Upon Others	40
d. Judgment of Character	41
e. Social Conduct	41
f. Conduct With Children	41
g. Financial Opinions	42
h. Ideas on Social Improvement	42
i. The Autobahns	42
j. Architectural Ambitions	42
k. Artistic Tastes	43
l. Religious Attitude	43
m. Hitler and Hindenburg	43
n. Administrative Policy	44
o. Distrust of the Military	44
p. Ignorance of Foreigners	44
q. Kindness and Cruelty	44

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

01-SR/36

INTRODUCTION

This report is the fourth and last of a series dealing with Hitler. The previous reports in the series were:

Hitler as Seen by His Doctors	01-CIR/2, USFET MISC, dated 15 October 1945
Hitler as Seen by His Doctors	01-CIR/4, USFET MISC, dated 29 November 1945
Hitler's Teeth	01-FIR/31, USFET MISC dated 5 February 1946

These reports were published in order to provide medical data for the identification of Hitler or his remains, material for discrediting various Hitlerian myths, information for exposing any future imposters, and research material for anyone interested in Hitler.

The present report endeavors to supplement the previous ones by furnishing data concerning Hitler's personality. The information has been obtained from people who, for longer or shorter periods, were in close contact with Hitler during his tenure of power. Unfortunately, it was not possible to secure an informant on the early phases of Hitler's life; but such information would be of interest principally for a neuropsychiatric history.

Obviously the accounts are all subjective impressions, and thus cannot be considered as the definite truth about the nature of the man Hitler. The sources, however, are from the group most closely connected with Hitler, which qualifies them to describe him. After reading all the accounts, the reader will have weighed one against the other and determined the salient characteristics of Hitler.

In a report of this type, a schematic organization would serve only to break up the individual accounts, and in order to preserve the original spirit, they have been left intact; even though many similar points are discussed, it is felt that they convey the truest impression when left in the context of the particular author's other remarks.

SOURCES

Blaschke, Dr Hugo J	Hitler's personal dentist from the beginning of 1934 until 20 April 1946. SS Brigadefuehrer.
Brandt, Dr Karl	Reich Commissioner of Health. He accompanied Hitler to Venice in 1934, and remained on his personal medical staff from that time until October 1944.
Brueckner, Wilhelm F	Hitler's personal adjutant from 1930 to 1940, when he was dismissed as the result of a minor quarrel. Subsequently, he joined the army and attained the rank of lieutenant colonel.
Eberstein, Karl von	HSSPf Sued, Wehrkreis VII, Munich, from 1938 to 1945. Frequently he was responsible for Hitler's personal safety.
Giesing, Erwin	Oberstabsarzt in charge of ENT clinic in the military hospital at Loetzen, East Prussia. On 22 July 1944, he was called by Brandt to examine Hitler's injuries from the 20 July explosion. He treated Hitler's ears, nose, and throat from July to October 1944.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

Hasselbach, Dr Hans
Karl von

Oberfeldarzt, chief surgeon in Army Field Hospital 2/562. He was one of Hitler's accompanying physicians from 1934 until 9 October 1944.

Heusinger

Chief of Operations Division, General Staff, 1943 to 1944.

Limpert, Dr Julius

Doctor of Political Science, journalist from 1920 to 1933. Oberbuergermeister of Berlin from 1937 to 1940. Served in the army from then until 1943, when he was appointed Kreis-kommandant in Southern Belgium. In 1944, he was in charge of artillery defenses at Bratislava and Budapest.

Riecke, Hans-Joachim

Head of the Food and Agriculture Division of the Ministry of Occupied Eastern Territories; later Reich Undersecretary of Food and Agriculture. SA Gruppenfuehrer.

Schmidt, Dr Paul O

Official interpreter of the German Foreign Office from 1923 to 1945. Hitler's interpreter during interviews with foreign statesmen.

Schwerin, Gerhard von

Professional soldier since 1915. During World War II, Commanding General of 16th Inf Div (mtz), 16th Pz Gr Div, 116th Pz Div, and LEEVI Pz Corps.

Schwerin von Krosigk,
Lutz

Reich Minister of Finance from 1932 to 1945. Foreign Secretary of the Doenitz Government, May 1945.

REPORT1. Blaschke: Personal Traits

Not once in all the years I knew Hitler, did I notice any indication in his behavior towards Eva Braun that he loved her, or was even infatuated with her. He always displayed the conduct of a father towards his -- possibly a little bit spoiled -- daughter, or of an uncle towards his favorite niece, never taking her quite seriously, but always treating her with consideration. There was never even an inling of tenderness indicating a relationship other than that between friends. And the same may be said of Eva Braun. She too never demonstrated that she loved Hitler -- and a woman is capable of hiding everything but her love for a man.

Hitler disliked others to lead or to dominate the conversation in his presence. This did not occur frequently, and a generally cheerful conversation at his dinner table was a rarity, and never of long duration. One evening, Ribbentrop was in particularly high spirits and was telling many witty stories, when Hitler interrupted him twice rather brusquely and started talking on other subjects.

Once Hitler had formed an opinion on a subject, it was almost impossible to make him change it; and he had his own, firm opinion about almost everything in life. When I treated Hitler for the first time, his lower incisors were very loose. Through the treatment and his conscientious following of my instructions regarding daily care of the teeth, the gingivitis healed, and the teeth became fit for use again. Then, after two or three years, I remarked to Hitler that the steadiness of the teeth was a consequence of the right way of brushing and massaging, he doubted this explanation. He said that it was the result of the cure which Morell had applied, the Auteflor cure, in which bacteria coli are swallowed in gelatine capsules which are supposed to dissolve in the colon. These bacteria coli are then supposed to form colonies in the colon to supplant the harmful bacteria. Hitler's manner of uttering and defending this was such as to make one feel that there was no sense in continuing the discussion.

RESTRICTED

~~RESTRICTED~~

RESTRICTED

SR/36

It always struck me that there existed a certain spiritual distance between Hitler and his oldest comrades; there was no intimacy between him and them. Actually, they were always inwardly "standing at attention" before him. It was not that Hitler had forced this distance through his attitude or behavior -- it was just there. He was at all time friendly and considerate with the men of his entourage, but they were ready at every moment to heed and execute his hints and desires.

Most of the time at the table, Hitler was the only speaker, and it was natural that the guests listened attentively. Those, however, who were around him all the time did not display much interest in his discourses. At first, I felt strangely about this fact, but later on I overcame this feeling when I noticed the inevitable repetition of topics. Frequently, one knew at the beginning of a discourse what turn it was going to take, Hitler became more taciturn during the last years, and then one had the feeling that he took part in the conversation superficially, his thoughts being elsewhere.

When someone felt that something was wrong with Hitler's dicta, he was kept from contradicting Hitler by the latter's conclusive manner of speaking, and preferred to remain silent and think that Hitler might be right after all.

Martin Bormann once remarked that some day National Socialism would take the place of Christianity. Hitler turned very sharply against this view, declaring that National Socialism must never take the rigid form of a dogma, but that, on the contrary, it must always adapt itself to every stage of social evolution. A hundred years from the present one, the evolution in technical fields, for instance, might very well change the current modus vivendi profoundly.

Once, when the conversation turned to Karinhall (Goering's luxurious estate), Hitler said, "My Berghof, of course, cannot compare with it. Maybe it could serve as its gardener's house". Another time, when his special train was being admired, he said, "It's all right, but you ought to see Goering's special train".

2. Brandt: Report on Hitler

Adolf Hitler was a very clean and well-groomed man. He insisted that his linen and clothes be kept spotless, his boots shined, and his hands clean. Whenever he had touched his dog, he would wash his hands immediately. He avoided everything dirty, and after every meal he brushed his teeth. In his rooms all was neat and orderly, except for his desk, which was cluttered with files and papers. This particular disorder, however, did not seem to disturb or confuse him.

His health, as well as his outward appearance, received his careful attention. For about twenty years he suffered from an ailment of the digestive tract and acted like a man with a gastric ulcer. The care of his digestion preoccupied him a great deal and provided the topic of many long conversations. The existence of an actual organic disease could never be confirmed, as Hitler refused to have his digestive tract X-rayed or his gastric juices examined. Whether his refusal was prompted by a fear that an actual disease would be found, I cannot say. In the course of years, medicines in a tremendous variety were tried, praised, and rejected. Whenever Hitler believed that a medicine had helped him, he would take it regularly for days, weeks, months, or even years, regardless of whether his doctors considered it necessary. If, while on a trip, he discovered that his medicine had been left behind, he made a great scene, even though he had suffered no detrimental effects from its omission. He consumed large quantities of stimulants and vitamins, and, in this way, he may have compensated for his lack of sleep -- he slept only a few hours each night. His desire for drugs and medicines was strong, and he used them not only on special occasions, but regularly for long periods of time. (He did not use morphine or cocaine.) His dependence on drugs led to a dependence on and an attachment to the man who administered them, Morell. This man could ask Hitler for anything, and not only were practically all of his wishes approved, but the whole state machinery was set in motion to fulfill them. Legal exceptions were made for Morell which would not have been made for anyone else.

~~RESTRICTED~~

RESTRICTED

3/36

Hitler characterized his habits as conservative ones. He maintained a certain persistency in his habits, holding to a daily working routine as well as to a daily routine of relaxation. In taking his dog for a walk, he went through the same field each time and each time threw a piece of wood from the same spot in the same direction. All other matters were handled with in as routine a fashion. In the Berghof, in Berlin, and at his field headquarters everything was done with an unequalled regularity and repetition. Even in extraordinary occasions when he had to make decisions of far-reaching importance, he was dependent on certain superficialities. At such times he would, if possible, retire to the Berghof. The great spaces and extensive views there seemed to be important in helping him to act. He would say: "In these surroundings I am able to collect my thoughts and find clarity for my decisions."

By means of his outstanding memory, Hitler acquired a vast knowledge of every field of human activity. He read much and had developed the ability of skimming through books, absorbing the important features of their contents. His memory took in facts as facts, whether they concerned events, people, numbers, or abstract conceptions. Knowledge of ancient as well as modern times, of distant as well as near places was included in his store. Any fact that Hitler had once learned he could recall without the use of superficial aids. In ten years I was not able to catch him in a single factual error. The support this huge collection of facts gave to Hitler's excellent dialectics enabled him to win almost all debates. He was so sure of himself, in this respect, that he ordered that all official discussions be taken down by stenographers in order that he might later prove that he had been correct.

Hitler's knowledge of medicine was not wide enough to enable him to defend his opinions as an expert, although he, like many laymen, enjoyed discussing problems of biology and therapeutics. When, in the course of redesigning the city of Berlin, plans were made to reshape the medical university and the clinics, Hitler often digressed from his interest in the blueprints of the buildings in order to talk about various medical matters. He asked to be accurately informed on X-ray research, on the development of surgery in the last decades, and on the problem of hydrotherapy and internal medication. His viewpoint was basically that of the academically trained medical man, and he rejected all quackery on general principles. Nevertheless, despite his general principles, he himself was sometimes found on these by-tracks of medicine, seriously entertaining the assertions of a quack.

Hitler took a great interest in architecture. Most of his plans for redesigning Berlin, Munich, Linz, and other cities date back to the years 1925 and 1926. Hitler himself roughly sketched many of the proposed new buildings, giving particular attention to those of Berlin. The idea of the Reichsautobahnen and a modern railway net originated in the same period. Hitler once remarked, "Since I want to be an architect and an artist, I must take a detour and busy myself with politics in order to execute my plans. For no king or legislature would grant me the funds my plans demand".

Despite his obvious show of superiority, Hitler suffered from a feeling of inferiority in some ways. This was evident when it came to things that could not be learned from books — social manners, for instance. Hitler had acquired the correct social manners in his youth, and he knew quite well how much embarrassment and damage a social error could cause. Therefore, he took great care to exhibit a social adroitness; his correctness was painstaking. He himself always supervised and checked all preparations for social gatherings, and frequently, when the party came to a close, he would remark contentedly how well he had performed on the ballroom floor. An example of his social hypersensitivity was his sudden departure from a banquet given at the Naples castle after an argument about formal dress had been started by the company. Hitler thought that the King and his entourage had deliberately tried to embarrass him. Usually, when Hitler was in a company where he feared that social manners were closely watched, he tried to force his hosts or guests to follow his lead in conversation and to impress them with his tremendous knowledge.

RESTRICTED

The composition of Hitler's entourage indicates the social and intellectual level at which Hitler felt most at ease. In the company of his adjutants and secretaries he regularly passed the hours of the late evening, and frequently the hours of the early morning as well. These nightly gatherings afforded him a certain relaxation, for in this circle he could air some of the thoughts that oppressed him.

In other small informal circles -- especially those which included children or elderly people -- where he felt himself unobserved, Hitler won the affection of many people by his kindness, his cordiality, and his capability for adapting himself to people and situations. He had an understanding for the little pleasures of life, participated in them, and gave the impression of being a free, genial human being. With women, Hitler displayed a definitely Viennese charm. He liked their company and sought, often without the required tact, beautiful and interesting ones; on these occasions he was almost coquettish. There seems to be no reason to question that such behavior was genuine and natural with him, or that he truly enjoyed being surrounded by beautiful women.

The relationship between Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun, whom he had known for more than fifteen years, was one of frankness and sincerity. Eva Braun was a pretty, graceful, and well-built woman, intelligent and not without strength of character. She was an elegantly dressed sportswoman, a good swimmer, and an excellent and courageous skier. Her character was stern rather than pliable and feminine. Through her own ambition and application, she greatly enlarged her knowledge during the years of her life with Hitler, and, from an average middle-class girl, developed into a lady of style. Eva Braun tried to do everything in her power to be to Hitler what he needed, even though this attempt naturally involved sacrifices -- sometimes great sacrifices. That Hitler did not marry her earlier was due to his conviction that a marriage would cause him to lose many of his female followers. His occasional remark, "The greater the man, the smaller the woman", did not apply to Eva Braun.

Hitler's intolerance of all opinions that differed from his own became more and more intense. Formerly, he had maintained certain opinions because they were right; later, certain opinions were right because he maintained them. Since 1933, he had become the sole man with power enough to make important decisions. His innovations continually gained appreciation; and many of the few opponents he had, he persuaded to become his followers -- often these converts were the most fanatical of his supporters. Undeniable successes, achieved by following the plans and precepts of Adolf Hitler, furnished convincing evidence that he had been right. Firmly persuaded that he had been, and still was invariably right, Hitler would not, when a failure occurred, admit any fault of his own, but always would blame the man whom he had delegated to the mission. As the failures increased during the last few years, this attitude led to a certain distrust of almost everyone.

Hitler became a lonely man. He did not, however, suffer from a persecution mania, though he always considered the possibility of an assassination. In his loneliness he showed extravagant appreciation for any little favors rendered him. When, for instance, one of his simple meals had been prepared exceptionally well, or when the cook baked some Viennese specialty, he would personally thank whoever was responsible and would talk about the incident for days.

The isolation and the increased self-consciousness of Hitler may have had something to do with the tremor of his left arm that appeared in 1943. This infirmity drew to his own person the attention of people who came to him with sorrowful stories about themselves. It proved to others that he, Adolf Hitler, was human too, and that he too had to bear his share of human misery. I presume that this tremor was of a purely psychogenic nature and not the symptom of an organic ailment; blood tests indicated no physical illness.

RESTRICTED

01-SR/36

The psychogenic character of the tremor is further indicated by the fact that the tremor disappeared completely after the attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July 1944 and did not reappear for weeks.

In conclusion, I should like to mention that Hitler had an unswerving faith in Providence. He believed to the end that help would come from some side, and it is certain that he took Roosevelt's death as a sign that his belief was well-founded.

3. Brueckner: Miscellaneous Remarks

There is no possibility of doubles having been substituted for Hitler, either for public appearance or in private. The possibility is excluded because of Hitler's characteristic feeling of contempt for such measures.

The report that Hitler fell on the floor in paroxysms of rage and chewed rugs is utterly unfounded.

Roehm was arrested by Hitler personally early in the morning of 30 July 1934 in the bedroom of a hotel in Wiessee, Bavaria; Hitler was accompanied by me, among others. Roehm was not in bed with anyone. Hitler spoke to him curtly, uttering only a sentence or two to the effect that he had received reports on Roehm's treason and that Roehm was under arrest. Hitler was somewhat tense, but not visibly excited, and definitely did not shoot Roehm or any other person involved in the affair.

Hitler was a vegetarian primarily on ethical grounds, although he also believed that the human body was designed exclusively for a vegetable diet. Hitler often spoke of the matter, and was fond of comparing the beasts of prey, such as tigers and lions, with the vegetarians among the animals, like elephants and buffalo. He maintained that, although the former were capable of tremendous efforts for short periods of intense activity, the latter class not only defended themselves with uniform success when attacked, but were capable of longer sustained and more constructive activity.

Hitler took no active part in sports, with the exception of walking. He was, on the other hand, interested in promoting sports among the people, and often attended sport meetings. To the surprise of his entourage, he attended every event of the Olympic Games in 1936, being especially enthusiastic about the fancy skating (Sonja Henie). He did not, however, attend the riding events. On several occasions he forbade members of his entourage to engage in the more dangerous sports, such as skiing and riding, because of the possibility of losing their services. I, however, was always able to get permission to continue my riding and assume that the others were too. Hunting and fishing were of no interest to Hitler. In fact, he showed some indignation for those who enjoyed shooting defenseless animals from points of safety and called it sport. Poachers were the only kind of hunters Hitler recognized, since they were the only ones who staked their lives when hunting.

Hitler never told jokes as such, but occasionally during the course of a discussion he would give a humorous twist to his manner of expression that would set his audience to laughing. He never made it his business to tell funny stories to amuse others, but he would often laugh heartily at others' sallies or at jokes and humorous situations on the stage and screen. His preference seems to have been for humor as opposed to wit. He had a definite dislike for dirty jokes. This was well known to members of his entourage, who took it upon themselves to warn newcomers not to tell any. Hitler's sense of humor was simple and natural, but there always had to be some point to the joke. He did not enjoy ridiculing people or causing discomfiture to others. He liked the humorous stories of Ludwig Thoma.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

OL 36

Although very fond of the society of handsome women, Hitler never referred in any way to any amatory experience, either current or in the past. He held women in such high esteem and admiration that he refrained from all remarks, even a hint, that might reflect upon their reputation. Hitler seems to have been almost prudish with women, somewhat inhibited, and though he was fond of them, left it to the woman to make advances.

Hitler played no social or individual games for amusement or entertainment. Cards, chess, etc. simply did not exist for him.

4. Eberstein: Women Around Hitler

About 1926, the future wife of Prof. Schultze of the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior, Mrs. Adla Schultze, played a part in Hitler's circle. She was at that time a secretary with the Party administration, and about twenty years old. It is said that she was constantly running after Hitler, which indicates that the relationship was quite intimate. After she left her position, it became less so, although the intimate "Du", an exception with Hitler, was still used between them. She is one of the few people who dared to draw attention to Bormann's dangerous character; in a long letter, written to Hitler in 1943, she called Bormann "Germany's grave-digger". It is known for certain that Hitler received this letter, but he paid no heed to it and called Mrs. Schultze a sick person, which she was not. Shortly afterwards, upon the instigation of Bormann, her husband was relieved without reason of his position as leader of the college teachers of Germany and fell into disgrace.

From 1926 to 1927, the daughter of the well-known piano maker Bechstein was in Hitler's circle. At that time, there was frequent talk of a marriage between her and Hitler.

From 1929 to 1931, a student of music, Angelika Raubal, lived in Hitler's apartment. She was the daughter of his stepsister, the widow Raubal, who later married Prof. Hammitzsch of Dresden. Angelika Raubal, called Geli, was very close to Hitler. Her picture, which he worshiped as an idol, was always in the bedroom of his apartment in Munich. She was educated in Munich at Hitler's expense. At the time, her mother was living in Hallein, and later moved to the Berghof at Berchtesgaden. Geli was pretty, slender, and brunette; she always dressed well. In 1931, when she was about twenty-five years old, she had an affair with Maurice, Hitler's driver, and after a heated argument over the matter with Hitler, she shot herself in his apartment. The incident caused a good deal of comment, and Hitler wanted to resign as leader of the Party. She was buried in Vienna, and Hitler, in spite of the current travel prohibitions and concomitant risk to himself, made a special trip there to place a wreath on her grave. It was generally accepted that Hitler had entertained a deep love for Geli, and that she had not returned it.

In the same year, 1931, Eva Braun, the daughter of a Munich official, appeared in Hitler's inner circle. She was then about eighteen years of age, and an assistant to the official Party photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann. The latter, later a "professor", was one of the most disagreeable people in Hitler's circle, but one of his closest friends. In 1931 in Weimar, where I had been sent by Hitler, I met Eva Braun, her sister Grete, and Hoffmann's daughter, later Frau von Schirach. Eva was pretty, slender, and blonde, but her mental capacity didn't appear very great to me. Later she developed into a doll, and had no occupation other than dancing and dressing. She attracted attention generally through her hysterical behavior. She owned a country house in Bogenhausen, but because her neighbors annoyed her, Hitler bought her another house. Wherever she lived, SD officials were constantly patrolling the house and environs to guarantee her security. After every air raid on Munich, Hitler called her in person to see if she were safe. Although he repeatedly requested her to move to the Berghof during the war, she refused to go because she found it boring in Berchtesgaden without him. During the last months before the end of the war, she managed to reopen the Prinzregenten Theater in Munich so that she might be entertained. The order was given by the servile Gauleiter Giesler, and astounded not only the actors, but also the

RESTRICTED

RE RESTRICTED

01-SR/

general public in the badly hit town. She left Munich in February or March 1945 and never returned. Her sister Grete spent a lot of time at the Berghof, especially after her marriage to the notorious Feglein, close friend of Bormann and Himmler's representative at Hitler's headquarters. The wedding caused great adverse criticism because of the protracted celebrations, the large number of guests, the colossal consumption of luxurious foods, and the donation of a large dowry, all taking place in the fifth year of the war. For the first time in a large circle, Hitler and Eva appeared arm in arm at the wedding. One cannot say with certainty that the relationship between them was intimate, but in my opinion, Hitler was definitely dependent upon her.

During the Reich Theater Week in 1934, Hitler was staying at the Bellevue Hotel in Dresden. There I met Baroness von Laffert at a supper for six people. In Berlin she was seen frequently in Frau Dirksen's house. She was extremely pretty, with dark blonde hair. The only other woman present at the supper was Magda Goebbels, accompanied by her husband. I was invited, to my amazement, because I was charmed with Hitler's security during his stay in Dresden. During the supper, Hitler treated the Baroness with great distinction, and talked to her almost exclusively. His conduct struck me. Later, the Baroness was always among the guests of honor at the annual Party gatherings in Nuremberg, and was always treated with great consideration by Hitler's staff. Afterwards she disappeared suddenly from Hitler's circle; it was rumored that she had connections with enemy intelligence.

Around 1938, Frau Marion Schoenemann, wife of the Munich contractor, came into Hitler's circle. She was then about thirty-five years old, slender, blonde, with dark eyes and a lively disposition; she was of Austrian extraction. Hitler liked to chat with her, attracted by her Austrian dialect. Frequently she was Hitler's guest in his Munich apartment, at the Berghof, at the house of Minister Wagner, and in the guest house of the Bavarian Government. She was greatly feared because she said whatever came to mind. Eva Braun, however, disliked her intensely, and eventually succeeded in having Frau Schoenemann relegated to a rear position.

Through his great love for the music of Wagner, Hitler, even before 1933, came in contact with Minifred Wagner and became a frequent guest in Bayreuth. His friendship with her was based solely on their common musical interest. I consider rumors to the contrary unworthy of belief because Frau Wagner was a very matronly woman. She had, however, great influence over Hitler, and many people used her as an intermediary when seeking favors of Hitler.

Another friendship based on common artistic interest was that with Gerdi Troost, widow of the Munich architect. She was an interior decorator, and received from Hitler the title of professor. In 1943, he also gave her the Golden Party insigne, an act greatly disliked by the legitimate wearers, especially as her political views did not warrant it. She had a prosaic, unattractive, and unwomanly appearance. She influenced Hitler greatly in artistic matters, and even if he had only a short time in Munich, he would spend two or three hours in her studio. Their relationship was probably purely spiritual.

It should be added that, according to well-informed police sources, Hitler maintained relations of a quite intimate nature in 1920 and 1921 with two girls. They were Molly Abel and Jenny Haug of Munich. The latter was the sister-in-law of Oskar Koerner, who was killed on 9 November 1923 in front of the Feldherrnhalle in Munich.

Although Hitler was basically inhibited with women, in social intercourse he had the easy manner typical of the Austrians. With women he liked he was charming, polite, and considerate, and women of all walks of life fell under his extraordinary power of suggestion. But for anything beyond intellectual exchange, the women had to take the initiative. With the exception of the two girls in 1920 and 1921, it can be said that only

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

01-SR/36

the relationship with Eva Braun had a sexual consummation. Hitler gave the impression of a timid man who could not become active himself. This may have been the reason for his frequent and sudden unfounded excitement.

With few exceptions, there were no real ladies in Hitler's circle. For a certain period of time, Magda Goebbels, who was a lady, received Hitler in her house. It was hoped that this environment would have a beneficial effect, but because of the usual intrigues nothing came of it. Through men like Hoffmann and Gauleiter Wagner, only a low class of women was brought into Hitler's circle. He had the Munich Kuenstlerhaus renovated in 1937 at his own expense for the benefit of the artists. On his occasional visits there, he was confronted with ballet dancers, movie extras, and student actresses, brought there on the last-minute orders of Wagner. They were supposed to represent artists' gatherings, and Hitler did not see the farce behind it because he never approached the women. He had no idea what went on after his departure, either at the Kuenstlerhaus or in the houses of Bormann and Wagner and in the Prinz Karl Palace. I never took part in these festivities, but was well informed on them by my SD personnel. The general public also knew what went on because the participating women were prone to speak of their experiences with the influential Party members. Serious artists and ladies would have no part in these activities, even at the earlier stages in the Kuenstlerhaus when Hitler was there. The wives of Hitler's oldest and best comrades remained plain and simple; for this reason, they were criticized by his entourage, and later by Hitler himself, and eventually were ostracized from the group.

5. Giesing: Report on Hitler

a. Preliminary Description

I knew Adolf Hitler from 22 July 1944 to 7 October 1944, the period in which I made examinations of his ears, his left maxillary cavity, and his larynx to determine if he had sustained serious injury when he was catapulted from his Bunker during the attempted assassination on 20 July. I also made two physical and neurological examinations of him, one on 26 August 1944, and the other on 3 October 1944. During this time I had approximately fifty-five talks with Hitler on diverse topics. We met only once later, accidentally, in mid-February 1945. I shall try to present a short characterization of his physical constitution, his personality, his mental capabilities, and his willpower as I observed them during my frequent, but short visits to his Bunker. I am aware of the incompleteness of my characterization, for I am neither a trained psychiatrist or neurologist nor an expert on military or political matters.

My first impression of Hitler was not of a powerful and feared man with a fascinating, hypnotic personality. He seemed to me, from my first observance, an aged, almost exhausted man who had to use sparingly the remainder of his strength. I did not find his eyes soul-penetrating nor his nature tyrannical, as they had been described to me by the press, the radio, and by the accounts of other men. However, I do not hesitate to admit that I had a strange, uneasy feeling when, on 22 July 1944, Brandt suddenly ordered me to treat Hitler's ears. This feeling became intense during the time that I had to wait in a small room of Hitler's Bunker for the appearance of this "tremendous, mystical superman". That is how his chief adjutant, Gen. Schmidt, had described him to me. I would have preferred that my first encounter with Hitler had taken place in a large room so that Hitler would have had to walk a few steps towards me and I could have had a chance to observe him -- even though only for a few minutes -- before being introduced. Nevertheless, in the circumstances as they were, I was the doctor and he only the patient. A realization of this relation, perhaps, prevented me from having a foregone feeling of inferiority and insignificance as I faced the head of the state. In addition, the confidence shown me by Hitler, after he had looked at me silently for a short while, facilitated the bridging of the gap in rank and importance.

- 10 -
RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

01-SR/36

Hitler's physique is quickly described. In his normal stooping posture he was exactly as tall as I (5' 8½"). Somatically, he was a light muscular type; the muscles of the legs, arms, and abdomen were medium-strong, despite the complete lack of exercise. (No hypertrophy of the muscles of the right arm and shoulder existed, although the physical endurance of these muscles -- probably acquired through frequent exercise and strengthened by willpower -- was astonishing. At Party celebrations and parades, he kept his right arm stretched out for many hours with only a few short interruptions.) Hitler's lax bearing, his slightly hollow chest, and his superficial breathing were partly attributable to a state of physical and mental exhaustion. Fat was normal, perhaps slightly over-developed on the abdomen. Body hair, in contrast to the strong beard, was scanty. In artificial light, the color of the skin on his body was strikingly pale and white. Axillary and pubic hair were normal. Although outsiders have presumed that Hitler's moustache concealed a harelin, no such physical deformity existed. The genitals too were outwardly normal. On the back of both thighs, light networks of superficial vessels were visible through the skin.

The thorough examinations which followed the 20 July affair revealed no damage done to the cranium; the right ear drum was ruptured, and the semi-circular canals and cochlea were injured, but no other parts of the internal organs were damaged; there were intestinal spasms with spastic constipation; the tremor of the left hand which was apparent from February until July was probably psychogenic; the stepped-up reflex response was probably a symptom of strychnine intoxication; Hitler was near to mental and physical exhaustion, perhaps in consequence of the withdrawal of strychnine and atropine administrations. (Giesing's full medical report on Hitler is contained in the two previous publications of this series which are referred to in the introduction.)

Constitutionally, Hitler was sanguine, with pronounced choleric traits. His self-control, however, was considerable; violent outbursts of rage seldom occurred, even when his temper was aroused. I have not seen Hitler in any such outbursts, and Schaub and Linde told me that hysterical fits, in which Hitler threw himself on the floor and chewed runs, did not occur*. Hitler restrained himself a great deal, particularly in the presence of strangers, and thus gave the impression of being a well-balanced personality.

b. Medical Observations

(1) Hitler's Use of Medicines and Drugs

Hitler was addicted to all sorts of medicines. Sedatives, tablets, and injections were used to aid his digestion, to increase the bacteria in his intestines, and to give him strength in general. From the regular use of anti-gas pills which contained strychnine and atropine,

* Giesing: "Professor Karl Haushofer, the geopolitician, told me the following on 31 August 1945: 'Before the war, Rudolf Hess confided to me that Hitler had been suffering from fits for some time. During these fits, Hitler perspired freely, and in several of them he bit his tongue and lost his self-control'".

Giesing: "General von Axthelm told me that he had once met a Stabsarzt or Oberstabsarzt who had some information concerning Hitler's fits. This man (whose name Axthelm was unable to recall) said that a doctor he knew had been called one night to assist an unconscious patient. When this doctor arrived at the scene, he discovered that the patient was Hitler, who was lying unconscious on the curb beside a car. Hitler's companions told the doctor that the fit was over. The doctor himself did not witness the fit".

None of the sources of this report present any direct evidence that Hitler had fits, nor do the doctors' reports in the previous reports of this series indicate that Hitler was subject to fits.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

01-SR/36

and from the cocaine administered during the treatment of the Nebenhoehlen (parts of the stomach), he derived a particularly pleasant feeling. It was Morell* who initiated the formerly healthy Hitler into the constant and absurd use of injections, and made Hitler dependent upon him to a certain degree by appealing to Hitler's neuropathic tendencies; by convincing Hitler that in his exceedingly strenuous work he consumed energy at a rate above normal -- like people in the tropics -- Morell persuaded him to submit to an immediate administration of all kinds of medicines (iodine, vitamins, calcium, heart extract, liver extract, hormones**, etc.). Hitler did not take very kindly my remark that he was "probably the only head of a state who took 120 to 150 tablets a week and, in addition, received 8 to 10 weekly injections".

The continuous stimulation of the anti-gas pills that were used frequently during the period from Spring 1942 until Autumn 1944 produced a toxication of medium strength which in September 1944 was manifested by jaundice and damage to the liver. Hitler admitted the possibility of such toxication by attempting to minimize the danger of any further damage to his health. During one of my visits he said to me, "Doctor, something just occurred to me. This strychnine business can't be too bad after all; my countrymen in Styria eat it too and feel fine after eating it. They form a habit, starting from early youth, and after they have been taking it in increasing amounts for a while, they are able to stand quite a large dose. I've been told that the amount they take would kill a person who isn't used to it." I told Hitler that these people in Styria did not eat strychnine, but arsenic, and that they were called arsenic-eaters. Hitler said, "I always thought that they ate strychnine to stay alive, but I guess you are right. I am surprised that you know all these things. If you hadn't told me otherwise, I would have believed that they eat strychnine." I told Hitler that this was not particularly expert knowledge; that it was part of the general knowledge of every doctor. Hitler then said, "Well, my dear Doctor, you are well versed in everything. I am really very grateful to you for what you have already done for me."

Hitler exhibited a constant euphoria which became especially remarkable in the elation he showed when making decisions after political or military failures. This exaltation could very well be the effect of the strychnine and atropine on a psychopathic constitution. A related effect was Hitler's hypersensitivity to bright lights and to strong smells and tastes. During my first visit to Hitler, I observed his abnormal sensitivity to light, and this observation was confirmed in conversations with Linge, Fehrs, and Arndt. Linge told me that for the past year and a half only one bulb had been burning in Hitler's room. In a prison camp in September 1945, Darre, former Minister for Nutrition, told me the following story, which indicates an earlier existence of Hitler's hypersensitivity: "One day after a conference in the Spring of 1932, Hitler suggested that we go to a movie. I got tickets, and we were in the lobby of the theater a few minutes before the beginning of the performance. Hitler did not want to go to our box immediately; he asked me to wait until the lights were out and the movie had started. While watching the show, Hitler seemed rather restless. During intermissions, when the lights were on, he leaned back in his seat as far as possible and covered his face with one hand. When the film approached its end, Hitler asked that we leave the theater before the lights went on so that no one would

* Dr Morell was Hitler's favorite physician. Brandt and Hasselbach, two other personal doctors of Hitler, disapproved Morell's professional abilities and disapproved of him personally, as does Giesing.

** At another point, Giesing said the following: "It is not known to me whether Morell gave Hitler any hormone injections. It would be important to know whether any strong hormonal influence was introduced to suppress female stigmata. On the occasion of the physical examination, neither a broad pelvis, a strong development of the mammary glands, an adiposity of the hips, nor any other female stigmata were apparent. Neither was Hitler's gait in any way effeminate."

RESTRICTED

recognize him. We then drove in his car to Dr Goebbels' home, as we had made an appointment to meet the Goebbels couple, who also had been in the theater. They had not yet arrived, so Hitler and I waited in front of the house. Whenever anyone passed by, Hitler turned up the collar of his overcoat and pulled his hat over his face. After a time, Hitler went to the house door and asked me to stand in front of him so that nobody could see and recognize him. I did so, and Hitler remained standing in the corner of the doorway with his face turned towards the house until Dr Goebbels arrived. We then went upstairs. Hitler was rather silent throughout the evening and tried to hide a strong restlessness."

(2) Abstinence From Alcohol and Nicotine

Hitler's abstinence from the use of alcohol and nicotine stands in contrast to his habitual use of drugs and medicines. At the time that I was treating a cold of his*, he said to me, "Well, Doctor, if alcohol is really good for a cold, I'll try a grog, of course. Normally I detest alcohol in every form. I don't see what people see in wine; it's too sour for me -- I'd like to put sugar in it. And beer is too bitter. At one time I occasionally drank a glass of beer before retiring, but I never could acquire any taste for it. The thing I cannot stand at all is nicotine. In that respect, I share the tastes of Goethe, who once said that the smell of tobacco was the worst smell of all. Besides, medicine has proved that nicotine has a pronounced detrimental effect upon people's health, in that it leads to an early hardening of the blood vessels and to cramps of the heart and brain vessels. I have read about young people, apparently healthy, who all of a sudden dropped dead from having smoked thirty or forty cigarettes a day."

We discussed the subject for a while and Hitler said, "Yes, tobacco and smoking are the revenge of the redskin on the white man for having brought him firewater. One of the reasons for the decadence and sterility of the Indians is their excessive use of nicotine. The firewater of the whites has caused an even further decrease in the fertility of the women. With the addition of the other detrimental features of civilization, the Indian race is now so far reduced that it is practically extinct. Nor will the American reservations save it from extinction if civilization is permitted to continue exercising its harmful influence."

Hitler made no serious attempt to enforce among his entourage the abstinence that he himself practiced.

(3) Vegetarianism

Despite scientific proof, Hitler refused to believe there was such a thing as a minimum requirement of protein. He did not believe that his frequent feeling of hunger resulted from a lack of protein in his diet. He preferred, instead, to try to satisfy his hunger by eating three or four pieces of cake twice a day with his tea.

One day Hitler asked me whether I knew that he was a vegetarian. I said that I knew. He told me that he had been a vegetarian from his early youth, and that, although he had occasionally eaten fish and eggs since then, he now omitted these items entirely from his diet. I told Hitler that we humans, with our particular denture, digestive tract, and digestive juices, occupy a place midway between the purely herbivorous and the purely carnivorous animals. Hitler replied that that was not so; he had read the book of a famous professor who proved that the denture and digestive juices of human beings destined them to be vegetarians. I told Hitler that the majority of scientists did not agree with that view. He went on to say

* When this cold first appeared, Hitler said, "Well, now I've caught a cold from the barber after all. That fellow has had a cold for five days and didn't tell me anything about it. Linge, you'll see to it in the future that nobody comes in here with a cold."

that formerly all humans had been vegetarians; the use of meat was a later detrimental feature of civilization. Even today, he continued, the greater part of the earth's population is vegetarian, since all Chinese and all Indians abstain from the eating of meat. I told Hitler that only parts of these two great peoples were vegetarian and that, generally speaking, the greater part of the earth's population is not vegetarian. Hitler said that that could not be so; he would read the book over again, and he would talk to me about it another time. In any case, he would continue to adhere to his vegetarian way of life since he no longer had any desire for meat.

Although Hitler frequently claimed that a vegetarian diet had increased his efficiency, the facts seem to contradict him. The records of his endurance in making speeches, in parading, and in traveling show that he must have been stronger and more efficient before his accession to power. Until 1932, according to communications from Schaub and Linge, Hitler had no knowledge of vegetarianism. Previous to that time, he ate large amounts of meat -- fat pork he was particularly fond of -- and frequently had animal protein in some form for breakfast. It has to be considered an exception and almost a miracle that Hitler, despite his diet, preserved a considerable capacity for work. His ability to get along with very little sleep is also exceptional. His physical soundness may, in part, be an inheritance from his parents -- his mother, Klara Poelzl, was a peasant -- and from his grandparents, particularly from his grandmother, Mrs Schicklgruber.

Darre presumed a connection between Hitler's sudden adoption of a vegetarian diet and the suicide (?) of his niece, Gretl Raubal, in 1932. If Darre's presumption is correct, it is possible that Hitler believed that as a vegetarian he would better be able to repress sexual desires he considered improper or excessively powerful.

(4) Insomnia

Morell to the contrary, Hitler's exhaustion did not result from overwork but from a lack of sleep. The amount of work that Hitler did was not so great as that done by a general staff officer. At least four or five hours of his day were wasted in repetitious conversations and monologues at meals and teas. It was in his sleeping habits that he violated sound hygienic rules. He completely reversed day and night. Not only did he hold his staff meetings in the middle of every night, he even insisted that his entourage keep him company in a long nocturnal tea which followed each staff meeting. Even after the tea, despite his fatigue, Hitler could not immediately find sleep. No medicines could alleviate his chronic insomnia to any great extent, and he stubbornly refused to induce a natural need for sleep by taking long walks, as he was advised to do.

Hitler showed no consideration for his entourage in this matter; they had to conform to his own unreasonable habits. I once asked Hitler whether it would be possible for him to omit his early morning tea so that he could go to bed immediately after the situation conference which would end at about two or three o'clock. He said, "Well, you know, Doctor, I've already tried that, but that way it's even harder for me to fall asleep. I have to relax before I go to bed and talk about something different. Otherwise, I have the situation maps in the dark before my eyes, and my brains keep on working. I can't get rid of the maps for hours. If I should turn on the light, I could draw exact maps of each army group; I know exactly where each division is. So it goes for hours, until I fall asleep at five or six. I know that this is very annoying for my entourage, and I know that they have to keep the same hours that I do, but I can't help it."

(5) Hearing

When I was about to make a minor operation on Hitler's ear, I asked him whether I should apply a local anesthetic. He said, "No, Doctor, I'll be able to stand it. I've had to stand worse things in my life, and anyway, I hope that this won't be too bad". (I performed several

RESTRICTED

01 3/36

small operations on his ear without anesthesia. As a patient he was quiet and not too sensitive.)

In mid-August 1944, after his hearing had improved considerably, Hitler told me the following: "Now that my hearing is better, all voices and noises seem to be even louder than before (20 July)." I explained to him that this was a normal development commonly accompanying recovery from cases of temporary or partial deafness. In approximately the following words, Hitler told me, "I remember now, very clearly, a similar phenomenon which I experienced at the age of 13 or 14 for about three months. It occasionally happened in school that all of a sudden I heard the teacher's voice become very loud and resounding. It seemed to me ten times as loud as usual. At the same time, the teacher's head would grow bigger and bigger and seemed to be moving towards me. When I turned my eyes away, the cupboard and the blackboard would appear to be crooked and leaning over. I would feel slightly anxious, and in my head I'd feel a pressure and hear a sort of humming. These phenomena would disappear after a few minutes, and I'd hear and see everything normally again. All this was not caused by a fear of particularly difficult classes, for it also happened during classes for which I was well prepared." I explained these phenomena to Hitler as slight puberty disturbances and did not tell him anything about their psychiatric significance.

(6) Interest in Medical Matters

Hitler's general knowledge of medical matters was remarkable. He understood the connection between the clotting of blood and the thrombocytes, the influence of nicotine on the coronary vessels of the heart, and the possible connection between an inflammation of the maxillary cavity and the condition of the teeth. He also had a competent layman's knowledge of sulfa drugs and penicillin. His opinions and remarks on matters in which he was prejudiced -- on vegetarianism, for example -- were uttered in such a dogmatic manner and with so much authority that it was lost labor, in most cases, to try to expose even the most apparent nonsense. On the other hand, he had a good understanding of medical questions new to him as I was able to notice when I talked to him about a book on autotherapy which I knew he had read only once.

One time, when I was in the Bunker for an examination of Hitler's ears, he said to me, "Tell me, Doctor, how large is an ear drum such as mine, and of what does it consist?" I explained it to him. Hitler then asked me about the sense of equilibrium, which I also explained. After I had examined both his ears with the mirror, Hitler asked me how I could see so well in the depths of the ear through such a small hole in the mirror. He said, "I would like to take a look at an ear drum too." He put on my mirror and I put the funnel in Linge's right ear. Hitler said that he could not see Linge's ear drum. I brought the otoscope from the office and introduced it into Linge's right ear. Hitler said, "Oh yes, now I can see something. I see clearly that little light-yellow line. That must be the famous hammer-handle. The other thing I can see too, the little speck of light up front (a reflex)." He then looked in Linge's left ear and said that he saw the ear drum there too. Next, he took all the tuning-forks in his hands and experimented with the whole set on Linge. He also timed Linge's responses with the stopwatch. (Linge told me later that that evening Hitler looked into his, Fehr's, and Arndt's ears through the mirror.) Hitler asked me whether I could get him a little textbook on otology, and I brought him the book two days later.

(7) Other Remarks

I told Hitler, "I consider it advisable that you spend six to eight days quietly in bed." Hitler replied, "Brandt and Hasselbach have already told me the same thing, but my dear Doctor, that is impossible. You and the others have all agreed that you want to make a sick man of me, but I feel well enough not to need bed rest. I've told the others already that I'm going to rest more and sleep longer, but my worries and the present events won't allow me to take it easy. I have a lot of work

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

to do right now, and I cannot receive visitors in bed. In the next few days I'm expecting some important oral reports, and besides, it's possible that foreign visitors might come here. It would look ridiculous if I were lying in bed while I'm in good health."

Hitler was constantly preoccupied with the idea of an early death. In the Autumn of 1944, he repeatedly stated that he had only two or three years to live. He believed, however, that by that time he would have achieved final victory in the war and that he would have led and united the German people to a point where others could continue the task. On the occasion of a visit of Professor von Eicken to Hitler's headquarters at Rastenburg, a conversation on this subject took place. Hitler greeted von Eicken and said, "My dear Professor, you had to make a long trip to see me, but I'm glad that you look so well. Tell me, how old are you now?" Von Eicken replied, "Seventy, my Fuehrer, and I'm going on seventy-one." Hitler then said, "Well, I guess I won't become that old. I'm eaten up by worry, sorrow, and bother, and I haven't more than two years to live." Von Eicken tried to dissuade Hitler from that belief but Hitler retorted, "My dear Professor, I shall be able to last out the two or three years I yet have to live and work for my people. Then the others will have to find the way to carry on the work."

Hitler was certainly a highly psychopathic person, a man who could not be convinced, even when all facts spoke against him. From Hitler's constitutional psychopathy, and from his firm conviction that he knew and was able to do everything better than others, originated a strong neuropathy. The stress he laid on observing his digestion indicates neuropathy, as does his frequent observation of his pulse, his constant preoccupation with the idea of an early death, his addiction to all sorts of medicines, and his constant sleeplessness.

c. Hitler and His Entourage

I do not know who made the selections for Hitler's personal staff. In any case, none of the selections was worth much. Schaub and Linge had long been confidants of Hitler and so, despite their limited intelligence, background, and training, they occupied a position of special favor. The military adjutants were well-trained staff officers and well-mannered; but none of the three known to me, not even the two chief adjutants, Schmudt and Burdorff, represented the type of intellectual soldier needed in their positions. The military adjutants were good soldiers and were more than ready to shoulder responsibility, but they were given extremely limited and unimportant duties which occupied them only a few hours of each day. The three representatives of the SS, Fegelein, Guentzsche, and Rattenhuber, were so far below the decent average that they hardly deserve to be mentioned. The quality of the rest of the staff is represented by the figure of the NSKK (Nazi Motor Transportation Organization) adjutant, Albert Bormann, brother of Reichsleiter Martin Bormann. He was Schaub's deputy and, intellectually, was almost as insignificant as Schaub himself. These were the people in whom Hitler had unlimited faith, and into whose trust was placed knowledge of the exact details of Hitler's plans and actions. These people were also the ones who pursued the glorification of Hitler to the point of outright adoration.

There are various reasons to explain why Hitler kept himself surrounded by these inferior men. For one thing, his knowledge of human nature was very slight; he never fully realized what terrible specimens these creatures were. Then too, he had a vague but strong feeling of gratitude for all those he thought had helped him in any way. He showed a great weakness in his unwillingness to reject anyone who could make a claim for his gratitude. Once Hitler had fully accepted a man, he showed what his entourage called a "Nibelungen fidelity". To Mussolini, for example, Hitler remained loyal, despite Mussolini's many failures. When, upon Mussolini's insistence, the planned operations in Africa for 1940 were abandoned -- a grave tactical and political error -- Hitler's show of fidelity became an absurdity. Hitler's friendship with Mussolini was durable and unselfish, while Mussolini was quite selfish.

16
RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

In regard to the inferiority of Hitler's entourage, it must finally be stated that Hitler was, after all, too much of a dominating personality and too firmly convinced that his opinions were absolutely right to be able to tolerate the constant presence of any person with intelligence or talent approximating his own. His despotic nature, characterized by the domination of severe psychopathic tendencies and a stubborn, fanatic will over highly developed mental qualities, did not allow him to consort with equals whose opinions might differ basically from his own. Hitler never felt the need of a friend, nor did he ever keep in his company anyone capable enough to be trained to succeed him. Because he was surrounded by people with whom he had little in common, Hitler appeared to the outsider a great and lonely idealist. To be sure, Hitler was frequently alone and lonely, but that was by his own choice; he never wanted to be merely a primus inter pares.

Partly because the little, ordinary people of his entourage respectfully and reverentially kept their distance from Hitler, never talking back to him and never presenting their own view on any point, Hitler showed himself tenderhearted and goodnatured to them, and was not at all tyrannical. During the times I was in Hitler's presence, even when things went wrong, I have never heard him say a harsh or rough word to his adjutants, his valets, or others of his entourage. He could display great friendliness and concern for the people of his entourage. For example, he gave Fegelein an unmerited decoration long after Fegelein had last been on the battlefield. To Morell he gave advancement and extravagant praise as "the best doctor", "the greatest scientist, whose excellent therapeutic methods will most certainly prevail against the resistance of all the other medical men". My own promotion came despite the fact that I had quarreled with Himmler and Bormann; the promotion was even made in Bormann's presence. Indeed, the frequent bestowal of high titles on incompetent people made one think of a parvenu society. On the other hand, he could quickly change to the other extreme and show ice-cold cruelty to former collaborators and friends; he showed such reversals of feeling in ordering the arrest of Prince Philip of Hesse, and in passing the death sentence on Professor Brandt.

Not only those who contradicted Hitler met with his disapproval -- he made an exception in my case, and occasionally allowed me to argue with him -- but even those who were simply the carriers of bad news became more or less discredited with him, and found that their chances for advancement were considerably lessened. As a result, the facts of a report frequently were embellished before the report was presented to him. The embellishment often consisted of improvised statistics, for Hitler liked and was impressed by expressions involving percentages and other numerical data.

Even though Hitler sometimes allowed me to contradict him in our conversations, I noticed that he often had to make an effort to control his temper when a difference in opinion became apparent. On one occasion, I disagreed with him during the course of a conversation on the use of Ukrainian agricultural workers in Germany. A friend of mine, a medical examiner working in East Prussia, had told me that he and many other examiners had rejected almost half of their shipments of the Ukrainian workers because of old age, physical disability, or tuberculosis. As I remember, of the 800,000 workers Sauckel reported in use, not quite 400,000 were capable of work. When I told Hitler these facts, he abruptly ended the conversation, remarking that he was going to get the figures once more.

Hitler and I also had a discussion of education, a subject on which we held differing opinions. Finally, Hitler interrupted me and, in approximately the following words, said, "Yes, what you suggest might have been all right in other times, but now we need a different kind of education, one which leads to a uniformly conscious Germanism and to a uniform feeling of superiority over everyone else. Just in this respect, the youthful leader is the best leader. It is up to us to train a sufficient number of these youth leaders, and it would be sad indeed if the

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

Hitler Jugend did not attain the ideal I had set for it. The academic youth, too, will one day realize that today's principles of education are better and more just than those of yesterday. I don't want intellectual qualities to be preponderant in our youth, and I don't want our youth to be judged exclusively by these qualities. I very definitely place the education of the body and of the character in the foreground; and I have reports from everywhere that our youth considers this education in conformity with Germanic traditions, and likes it." I realized then that Hitler did not at all care to be influenced by any arguments; he quite simply insisted on advancing the same point of view again and again because it was his own and, therefore, was the right one.

d. Hitler and the War

(1) Russia

Hitler suddenly started talking about Russia. He said, "I took up the fight against the Bolshevik Moloch in June 1941, and I am going to finish it victoriously. The only adversary who is my equal, in a way, is Stalin. I have to admit my admiration for what he has made of Russia and for his military accomplishments. Nevertheless, in the end, the Bolshevik wave will be broken by the iron ideology of National Socialism, and I shall crush this Eastern Asiatic breed. My other adversaries, Churchill and Roosevelt, are of little account, either politically or militarily. England will fall apart completely, and America will gobble up the pieces of the British Empire, which will then be a thing of the past. I don't understand the stupidity of these people. They don't see the Bolshevik danger; they don't see that they are cutting off the limb they're sitting on. I wish that these two powers would realize, before it's too late, that they are fighting on the wrong side. I can see that I shall be the one who'll tip the scale (Zugewiege) when the time comes for a decision between the Russians on the one side and the Anglo-Americans on the other. Providence has shown me that you cannot make any agreements with Bolshevism. I shall never come to terms with Russia." Since these ideas were completely alien to my mind, I made no remarks about them.

(2) Stalingrad

I asked Hitler to tell me what had been the reasons for the Stalingrad disaster. Hitler said, "Doctor, don't believe a word of what the others are saying. It wasn't that faulty intelligence work left us uninformed of the large Russian troop concentration on the left bank of the Volga, nor was it that the Russians took us by surprise, nor was it the hardships of winter. I had taken everything into account; I wanted to fight and to force the decision right there. But just when the situation around Stalingrad deteriorated in December 1942, the Luftwaffe left me in the lurch, although Goering had told me that he could guarantee the complete air support of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad for at least six to eight weeks. By the time the first indication of the Luftwaffe's failure appeared, it was too late to do anything about air support. In addition to that, it happened that during the critical days at Stalingrad, when neither the Italians in the North nor the Rumanians in the South could hold the line, I could not be reached because I was traveling in my special train. For about 24 hours I wasn't able to lead the battle in person, and when I heard about the disaster, it was already too late." I asked Hitler whether the commander of the army group did not have the authority to commit reserves on his own responsibility in a particularly critical situation. Hitler answered in an angry voice, "No, Doctor, that cannot be done. I am the one who leads the Army, and I believe that I am a better commander in chief than those people in front of me. It's I who am the motor that drives everything, and it's I who know everything. It's a tremendous task for me to have to make all the final decisions, but at such an important era in the life of a people, the head of the state has to pass the last judgment on all matters, even on those that seem to be of minor importance. The fortunes of war frequently deal out reverses like Stalingrad. I know that Providence has provided our adversaries with them in abundance up to now, and will continue to do so."

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

01 /36

In my thoughts, I reviewed the situations in the Crimea and near Cherkasi, and the difficult position of the Baltic divisions. I don't know what Hitler thought about my prolonged silence, but he took leave of me rather suddenly and said only, "Good-by, Doctor."

(3) Isolation in Rastenburg

After 1943, Hitler made no more flights to the front or trips to industrial areas. He did not undertake his voluntary isolation at Rastenburg because he was overly considerate of his own safety, for as late as 15 September 1944, attended by only a few bodyguards, he walked through a large crowd of people and permitted himself to be photographed repeatedly. Hitler, though he was a man of action and will power, was not able to face the horrors and miseries that the exigencies of war produced at the front and among the civilian population. Living in his shelter, he learned all the news, of successes and of failures, from the radio and the telegraph, and never from personal inspections of the situation, nor through personal experience. Even within the Wolfsschanze headquarters in Rastenburg, he stayed inside his own air raid shelter although the headquarters was never attacked from the air. The shelter was the only place where he felt well and was able to work.

(4) Refusal to Leave Rastenburg

Hitler said, "From a medical and clinical point of view you are probably right, Doctor; but for political reasons I cannot leave my headquarters. If I left, the people here in East Prussia would be justified in thinking that I was abandoning them to the Russians. Even if I were to leave in the most secretive way, the people would somehow come to know about it, and there would be unnecessary bad feelings among them. Once before, in 1914 and 1915, the poor people here have experienced the Russian terror; I want to spare them a second time. I can't go to Berlin, because the English and Americans would soon find out about my presence there, and thus I would cause the Berlin population to suffer from increased bombings. I can't go to the Obersalzberg either, because the people would think that I was retiring to my private estate, and that I had left the conduct of the war to the generals, and political affairs to the members of the cabinet. Nobody out there knows that when I go to the Obersalzberg I take the whole chancellery, the Party Headquarters, the General Staff, and the High Command with me, and all of us slave there just as much as here. It's true that if the climate here in East Prussia weren't so humid, I'd probably be better by now; but I have to stay here for the time being. My health doesn't count when the whole nation's existence is at stake."

(5) Prohibition of Furloughs

Hitler found it ridiculous for anyone to criticize his suppression of furloughs, since he himself had not taken a rest for years, and was near exhaustion as a result of the continuous strain. He said to me, "I can't understand the way these fools think -- as though in this war anyone could claim even well-deserved rights. All of us have only duties. Providence has imposed upon me the obligation to lead Germany no matter whether I get my rest or break down -- and then these little creatures, little wheels in the huge machine, come along and ask if they may stop working."

(6) 20 July

An SS adjutant came and reported that Helldorf had confessed. He handed Hitler a document -- apparently the report of the interrogation -- and Linke gave Hitler his glasses. Hitler read the document and then said, "Yes, I wouldn't have thought that Helldorf was such a scoundrel. He's always been frivolous, it's true -- always running up gambling debts. At least four or five times I've paid his debts for him, and they were rarely less than 100,000 marks. It was a mistake to give him a job in the secret service. A gambler like him is an easy prey for counter-espionage, and the British secret service probably paid him better wages

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

01-26

and even higher gambling debts than I did. I feel sorry for his wife and his nice children, but this Aryan stable has to be swept with an iron broom, no quarter given. If I don't root out these traitors completely, there might be more of these damned things, and the poor German soldier up there on the line has to pay with his life for the stupidity of these people. I'm really thankful to Rehmer, who mastered the situation so quickly up there in Berlin. That I need is more of that kind of excellent and politically clever officers, and then I wouldn't be afraid of the future. But this bunch of cowards in Berlin sends me this even more cowardly Stauffenberg. If he had at least been enough of a man to stay next to me with his briefcase — but as it is, the bullet that hit him was really wasted. I have often wondered what these people wanted. To end the war and then have their government of jokers start peace negotiations with the enemy because their bunch was too cowardly and too incapable to go on with the war? As though Mr Stalin, Mr Churchill and Mr Roosevelt would have given a hoot about our sudden desire for peace. The Russians would have been in Berlin within eight days, and that would have been the end of Germany forever."

(7) Attitude in February 1945

Hitler and I sat down on a bench in the corner. He seemed more aged and stooped than ever. His face was pale as usual, and he had large bags under his eyes; his hands too were pale and the fingernails bloodless. He spoke clearly but in very low tones. I immediately noticed the strong tremor of the left arm and hand. Because the tremor increased when the hand was not supported, Hitler kept his arm on the table or his hand on the bench throughout the conversation. I had the impression that Hitler was exhausted and rather absent-minded, and no longer concentrated well. Twice he asked me where my family lived, and twice I told him that they lived in Krefeld. Just after I had answered his question the second time, he suddenly began to talk about the war. He said, "Well, Germany is in a difficult position, but I'll master the situation. The Anglo-Americans will find that they're very much mistaken in thinking that their victory is certain. They're going to have a tough time. I'm going to commit my V-weapons soon, and then the war will be brought to a glorious end. The problem of atom splitting has been solved a long time ago, and it has been so far developed that we can make use of this energy for weapons. These people are going to see something. This is the weapon of the future, and with it Germany's future is secured too. Providence has already shown me this last and victorious road, and I know that the final turn of fortune is about to come." Hitler said these things mainly to himself, looking at a point on the floor. The tremor of the left arm was clearly apparent when he let the arm hang. Then he asked me again where my family was. I repeated that they were in Krefeld, and he said, "Nothing can happen to them there, that is certain. The West Wall will hold, absolutely, and our V-weapon will decide the war in no time at all. Doctor, I want you to believe firmly that this is so." He looked at the floor for some time, and then suddenly began to speak again. "If the war should take an unfavorable turn after all -- well, all of us will have to go down in a decent manner. I shall place myself at the head of my troops and die as a soldier. But Providence has led me safely so far, and I shall go my prescribed road no matter what happens." He stood up quickly and extended his hand, looking past me into empty space. He did not say anything more, but walked away with tired steps towards a large open door where Linde was waiting for him.

6. Fasselbach: Hitler

a. Knowledge and Mental Capacity

Hitler's general knowledge was amazing in view of the fact that he had not attended even high school. As he matured, a tremendous thirst for knowledge, an indefatigable diligence, and an enviable memory furnished him sufficient knowledge to dominate every discussion, and to express well-founded, if sometimes rather surprising ideas in many fields.

Conforming with his task as a politician, his main interest lay in the field of history, which he made the basis of his political views and

20
RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

intentions. Besides Austrian history and the more recent history of Bavaria, he was especially interested in the history of Rome, the great German emperors, Prince Eugene, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon. He pondered again and again over the connections and continuity of European history, such as the impressive achievements of the Papacy, the recurring menace of Asia's masses against Europe, the power and greatness of the German emperors of the Middle Ages with their mistaken urge for expansion toward the South (Drang nach Sueden), the history of national unification in Germany and Italy, and the consistency and unity -- which he found enviable -- of the British policy. On these occasions, he liked to criticize the teaching of history in most schools, which neglected basic trends in favor of the biography of single monarchs and insignificant dates.

Hitler's knowledge in the field of history of art was equally extensive. He knew details of the life and works of most great painters, sculptors, and architects. When differences in opinion had to be decided through consultation of the encyclopedia, Hitler was right most of the time. Occasionally, I myself did not believe that he was right in stating a certain fact, or that he could be familiar with a certain detail, but I have always been able to convince myself that what he had said was so.

Hitler's knowledge in the military field was also astonishing. The officers of his staff again and again were surprised to find how accurately Hitler was informed on the caliber, mechanism, range, armament, and speed of German and foreign military equipment, details of fortifications, and the like. When new weapons or vehicles were demonstrated, with an astonishing intuition he recognized their structural advantages and disadvantages, and frequently made useful suggestions for their improvement. Technical details of automobile and airplane motors were well known to him. He also showed vivid interest in technical problems relating to the production of substitutes. Although he was informed about them, he did not pay much attention to other technical problems such as high frequency and atomic physics. He recognized their importance in the military field only after the progress of our adversaries in these fields had gained for them decisive influence in the air and sea wars.

Questions in the medical and biological domains aroused his interest greatly. His knowledge of facts in this field was also above the layman's. He always had reports on new developments submitted to him, and wished to be furnished medical literature on them. He did not, however, pretend to have expert knowledge, nor did he try to influence the experts' work; he wanted only to be informed as much as possible about the effect of drugs, etc. It was in keeping with his critical attitude towards medical problems that he rejected all quackery, and recognized the successes of scientific medicine, advocating, for instance, prophylactic vaccinations on the basis of their success during World War I. In other respects, he had preconceived opinions which he refused to abandon, like the erroneous notion that man is naturally vegetarian, and therefore more efficient when living on vegetable foods than when using a mixed diet.

Hitler occupied himself intensely with the great philosophers. He was attracted particularly by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Also he devoted much time to astronomy, prehistoric research, geography, and physics. Theology, jurisprudence, mathematics, and other branches of science attracted him less, although his knowledge in these fields also surpassed that of the man with an average background. Actually, there was nothing that did not arouse his interest when he was confronted with it as a problem.

Hitler acquired the bulk of his knowledge through independent reading. He said occasionally that he never let a day pass without working his way through some book containing some essential knowledge. He did this in peace and war during the late hours of the evening and the early morning, the only time of the day that he was alone. His memory was dependable in regard to names and numbers as well as events and their context.

In contrast to other people who are gifted with an excellent memory, Hitler used quotations rarely, either in his speeches or in

RESTRICTED

casual conversation. He probably considered himself above using this kind of intellectual support. However, he knew the classics well, partly from the stage, and partly from his readings in his youth, although they played little part in his later life. Sometimes he would express regret that English history had been glorified by Shakespeare, whereas in Germany, Schiller had dealt with people like William Tell, Joan of Arc, and Mary Stuart. He hoped that some day a talented playwright would occupy himself with the history of the German emperors of the Middle Ages. Hitler had no understanding of poetry, especially lyric poetry.

He rejected the reading of novels and lighter material as a waste of time. However, he felt obligated to look through the more important German newspapers and periodicals. He influenced the content of the German press considerably up to the past years. Besides the German papers, he had English, American, and French papers read to him regularly; he had a smattering of English and French from grammar school, which he supplemented by having British and French films shown to him with the original sound track.

Hitler's power of judgment was excellent and his logic good, except when prejudices or emotional factors influenced, and sometimes determined his views and decisions. In these cases, he would allow himself to be carried away and make irresponsible remarks which might have caused people who did not know him to doubt his perception in judgment. The topics he would treat in this manner were law as handled by the legal profession, whose representatives he condemned as a group; the intellectual and moral degeneration of royal families; and the narrow-mindedness of the teachers in colleges and universities, who, in his opinion, considered their main task to cling to their own theories, and therefore were opposed to scientific progress. Along with these belong his statements on the Jews, who, he said, were cunning, but stupid and unproductive, and his views on the intellectuals, whom he liked to criticize in an exaggerated manner. Such statements, so much in contrast to his open-mindedness and critical capacities, were always based on some psychical trauma. Since the effect of these traumata was always present, it was impossible for anyone to induce Hitler to change his views through logical arguments. Anyone who made suggestions tending to suggest a more cautious attitude usually fell into disgrace, and contrary to the desired effect, a stronger fixation to the prejudices was produced.

The speed of Hitler's mental processes was amazing. He was never at a loss for a fitting retort, and his presence of mind permitted him to master every situation.

b. Entourage

Hitler repeatedly asserted that one of his outstanding abilities was his knowledge of human nature, and that only a short appraisal was necessary for him to ascertain a person's qualities and the kind of job for which he was best fitted. From the beginning, the choice of collaborators seems to make rather doubtful the accuracy of this conviction. One would assume that a man in Hitler's position would try to surround himself with intelligent, experienced, and reliable people, yet he made Martin Bormann his closest and most trusted political advisor, Schaub his chief adjutant, and Morell his personal physician. He tolerated as his frequent and always welcome guests people like Heinrich Hoffmann, Hermann Esser, and Adolf Wagner, men whom the German people would rather not have seen in the environment of their Fuehrer. Frequently Hitler had pointed with pride and satisfaction to the "Old Guard" of his Reichsleiters and Gauleiters, men who, according to him, had in the purity of character and excellence of their abilities no counterpart in history. He made these statements even after the German people had become fully aware of the failures of many of these men in their public and private life. The most important positions were filled by men incapable of competent action, men like Ribbentrop, Hess, Frick, Rust, Axmann, and others; and on the other hand, Hitler underestimated his opponents.

A clear-cut answer cannot be given for these errors in judgment. Hitler was certainly convinced of the loyalty of his corps of political

RESTRICTED

01-5-36

leaders, but he did not consider their competence adequate. However, he could not get himself to make any major changes. All his life, and particularly after World War I, Hitler was dominated by a pronounced feeling of Kameradschaft, of a feeling of loyalty and gratitude to the men who, during the era of struggle and persecution, had been his faithful friends and had made heavy sacrifices. Therefore, he had no understanding for Mussolini's method of changing collaborators frequently.

In this respect, the fact that Hitler had extremely conservative habits played a great part. Just as he did not want any changes in his daily routine, taking the same walk every day, wearing the same kind of outmoded hat, visiting the same restaurants through the years, and keeping his Munich apartment despite its great deficiencies, just so did he tend to avoid parting from the men to whom he had become accustomed. Still, he would have taken such a step had he been capable of seeing the full incompetence and repulsiveness of his entourage; he called Ribbentrop a second Bismarck and Morell an unusually capable doctor and scientist. He did remark occasionally that he was aware that not all of his old comrades-in-arms were angels, which was only natural since they were fighting men.

In some cases, however, one must assume that Hitler was capable of repressing, as it were, a correct, but inconvenient, opinion, so that he could justify to himself the retention of men he considered useful and loyal. (This is paralleled in 1945 by the manner in which he maintained against his better knowledge his unshakable belief in final victory.)

In addition, his attitude towards others was influenced by his belief in his own extraordinary qualities, necessitating application of lower standards to other men, although sometimes his demands on them were limitless. His opinion that a great man ought to have insignificant female companions may have been similarly applied to his entourage. It may also be that he needed unassuming, uncritical men around him as a practice audience for the exposition of his ideas. He was prejudiced from his youth against the bourgeois intelligentsia, so that he did not want men as collaborators who had gone through the usual professional training. Instead, he was attracted by men who had been thrown off the normal path and achieved success solely through their own efforts, as he had.

c. Religion

Hitler was considered by many people in Germany and abroad to be a declared enemy of Christianity, if not an atheist. Those who had the experience of seeing him relaxed and away from his official places of duty, however, will confirm that he was actually a religious person, or at least a man seeking religious clarity.

Before the war, Hitler frequently showed an interest in religious problems. He recognized without reservation the necessity of satisfying the religious needs of the people, at least those of the simple man in the street. He knew only too well that the Party and its mass activities could never serve as a surrogate for the Church. He remarked occasionally that he would refuse to be deified after his death, as was Lenin by the Bolsheviks. In talks lasting for hours, he discussed possibilities for bridging the confessional schism in Germany, and for the establishment of a religion compatible with the modern German's character and ideology. That he himself did not have the qualities of a religious reformer, he knew and expressed frequently. Consequently, he was desirous of suitable suggestions, but did not receive any.

In Christ, he saw a unique personality whose ideas and actions had, according to Hitler, been dogmatically distorted by the Church and thus handed down to posterity. He said Christ had been of Galilean origin and, therefore, Aryan, and should be admired not only for his creation of a new ethical concepts, but also as a great leader of the people against the power and tyranny of the demoralized Pharisees. Before the war,

- 23 -
RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

Hitler once attended the Passion Play at Oberammergau. He was strongly impressed, not only by the touchingly plain presentation of the story, but also because he saw in it an unintentional, and, therefore, particularly effective anti-Hebraic demonstration.

In a small circle, Hitler would sometimes express himself in sharp words against some of the Christian dogmas. In regard to the communion for instance, he professed a lack of understanding for the fact that a person had to consume his Lord in order to achieve a spiritual union with him. In the same manner, the dogma of the immaculate conception and the symbol of the Lamb of God provoked his criticism. Indulgence he rejected violently as a means of blackmail, and confession as an attempt to satisfy repressed desires by devious means.

Hitler defined the Papacy as a political instrument of power unique in history, whose consistency and skill in the prosecution of its aims he admired. However, he did consider it his task to eliminate political Catholicism in Germany. Luther, whom he considered one of the greatest Germans of all times, he blamed for not having gone all the way in his attempt to free the Germans from Rome's grip; he had thus caused great misery to Germany.

Hitler had an aversion to the clergy of all denominations. He kept all priests and ministers away from himself; he regarded their profession as unmanly. Consequently, he met probably only very few leading and well-bred clerical men, and probably hardly ever heard a good Protestant sermon. It is true that he was not partial in his aversion to religious dogmas and ceremonies, as shown by the fact that he rejected the ceremonial meetings of the Gottgläubige (Believers in God). He once remarked, however, that the Christian baptism of Goering's child was preferable to the Gottgläubige baptism used by Rudolf Hess.

Since the funeral rites of Hindenburg, participation by the clergy in political ceremonies of the State had been prohibited. Contrary to the reports of the foreign press, however, no obstacles were placed in the way of religious services and their communicants, neither before nor during the war, unless political utterances on the part of the ministers caused the State to interfere.

Hitler regretted greatly the German churches' attitude of enmity toward National Socialism. He regretted the fact that before World War I the efforts to create a unified German State Church had failed because of the attitude of the Laender. He envied other countries, like England for instance, where the Church was a skillful supporter of the Government's policy. Hitler held the German clergy responsible for the failure of the State and Church to cooperate closely and profitably in Germany after 1933. He accused them of having entered into the political domain instead of confining themselves to their proper tasks. When the struggle became more heated on both sides, he even approved the arrests of numerous clerical men who had the courage to express their convictions. The frequent, and in his eyes hypocritical attacks of the Anglican Church against National Socialism, and its prayers for a Bolshevik victory, quite naturally influenced his anti-ecclesiastical views. He regarded the clergy's struggle against the National Socialist State as treasonable for the reason that the State was not only collecting the church tax for them, but even paid them an annual subsidy of approximately 300,000,000 marks, thus ensuring their existence.

Despite all this, it is true that Hitler did not draw a complete dividing line between himself and the Church until the end. The reason he paid his church tax every year was based probably more on political expediency than on a desire to belong or a feeling of loyalty to the Church. On the other hand, in spite of the increasing severity of his struggle against the Church and its representatives, it can be said that Hitler's expressions in his speeches of a devout trust in Providence were heartfelt, and should refute the theory that Hitler was an atheist.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTEDd. The Arts

Hitler was convinced that he would have been a Baumeister (master builder) if fate had not led him into politics. He was obviously not only extremely interested in architecture, but also definitely gifted for its artistic and technical problems. In his early youth, his talent as a draftsman expressed itself more and more with architectural themes. So far as is known to me, most of the water colors with which he made a living in Vienna and Munich represented well-known buildings, attractive town views, and the like. Later too, as chancellor, he frequently picked up pen or pencil in order to sketch quickly and with a few sure lines an architectural project he had in mind. Occupation with architectural blueprints was his favorite form of relaxation. He could, oblivious of everything, devote himself to this pastime for many hours, with Prof Speer and other architects. All the projects for Nuremberg, Munich, Berlin, and Linz were discussed in their minutest details, projects which, in accordance with his predilection for the immeasurable, he sometimes had drawn up in tremendous dimensions, like the stadium in Nuremberg, the Memorial Column in Munich, or the Congress Hall in Berlin. He regretted later that he had not made the living room of the Berghof longer and higher when it was rebuilt. Its design, incidentally, was his in all details.

The style which Hitler preferred for the new German buildings leaned heavily on classical examples, which he admired; he had no understanding of Gothic architecture. Its copious use of ornaments was opposed to his conviction that in architecture only that could be beautiful which at the same time expressed the purpose it served. Therefore, he repudiated the Rococo, although the Baroque was a little more to his liking. On his trip to Italy in 1937, he was impressed by the Pitti Palace in Florence, as well as by numerous other buildings there and in Rome. He enjoyed this trip at least as much as an architect as he did as a politician. In Germany, he was particularly attracted by Ludwig Strasse in Munich. Its creator, Ludwig I of Bavaria, was, because of his interest in the arts and his views favoring a united Germany, one of the few modern monarchs whom Hitler esteemed. Hitler was very happy about the new Chancellery in Berlin, and the Fuehrerbau and the Haus der Kunst in Munich. Whenever he was in Munich, he tried to make it possible to visit these two buildings.

His interest in painting was almost as strong as that in architecture, although he preferred to draw rather than to paint. It was not a collector's mania, and even less the desire for material wealth, that made him acquire paintings, but a genuine love of the painter's art. He was attached to the paintings he owned, and he expressed this frequently. He directed personally the handling and rehanging of the paintings at the Berghof. As in most fields of human activity, he considered his views and tastes as an art critic absolutely right and authoritative, and, therefore, did not hesitate to influence the art of painting in Germany.

Every year until nearly the end of the war, he determined which paintings were to be admitted to the great German exhibition of art. In this field, he could not be called partial or prejudiced, but he demanded that an artist not just "smear paint on a canvas". He demanded that the public — or rather he himself as an expert — be in a position to recognize a certain talent, and that the product correspond with popular conceptions and sentiments embodied in his own conceptions and sentiments. Consequently, he suppressed all expressions of "degenerate art", an interference with artistic freedom that was superfluous since the large majority of the German people refused to recognize these mis-creations of the past.

It is true that Hitler's taste could err to an unbelievable degree. This is shown by the example of his stressed favoritism for the works of the painter Ziegler of Munich, whom, however, he discarded completely later on. So far as I know, Hitler held in esteem the following contemporary German painters: Krieger, Junghans, Hilz, Schwind, Schuster-Wolden, Gradl, and Peiner. Of the German painters of the Nineteenth Century, he favored Schwind, Feuerbach, Blechen, Alt, Waldmueller, Spitzweg, Leibl, Gruetzner, Makart, and Stuck. He also held in high esteem

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

01 3/36

the great Italian and Dutch painters, but did not like old German masters such as Duerer, Cranach, and others. To Linz, his father's native city, he intended to present as an expression of grateful attachment a particularly abundant and extensive collection of paintings. For this purpose, he had pictures bought or requisitioned from seized property.

Hitler likewise showed vivid interest in the evolution of German sculpture, although he did not consider himself as much an expert in this field as he did in painting. Besides Klinsch, Kolbe, and Tackerle, he particularly liked the works of Thorak and Breker, whom apparently he supported in every imaginable way. Breker's style conformed with his predilection for classicism, while Thorak satisfied his inclinations towards the immeasurable. Hitler did not exclude size as a factor in his judgment of works of art. That was probably the reason for his enthusiasm for Thorak's equestrian statue of Frederick the Great in Linz. The work was considered a failure by most experts.

Despite his ability as a draftsman, Hitler did not have much interest and understanding for the graphic arts. On the other hand, he enjoyed very much occupying himself with interior decoration and the applied arts. When he came to Munich, his first visit would usually take him to the Troost studio, where he would discuss for hours artistic problems with Prof Gall and Frau Troost, whom he recognized as a great artist. Grave examples of bad taste occurred in this field, like the deformed "German Cross in Gold", a creation approved by Hitler.

Hitler considered himself gifted with a great understanding of music. I am convinced that here too he greatly overrated his gifts. Not only would he whistle tunes wrongly in a terrible way without noticing it, but also his choice of music did not indicate a refined feeling. It is incomprehensible that, so far as I have experienced or heard, there was never any chamber music offered in the beautiful hall of the Berghof, although an excellent grand piano was there. Hitler kept an immense number of phonograph records in a chest at the Berghof. He selected a few of them and played them to himself occasionally, but he never played them in any particular order. His favorite pieces were excerpts from the Wagner operas, one or two movements from Bruckner's Seventh Symphony, and excerpts from "The Merry Widow", "Fledermaus", and "Opera Ball". When once he had finally approved of Beethoven's Piano Concerto in E Flat, he stopped its playing in the first movement. It is known that Hitler worshiped the music of Wagner and that he derived a special pleasure from attending the Bayreuth festivals. This pleasure was increased by his friendship with the Wagner family. He held Bruckner in at least as high esteem as Wagner. He recognized the greatness of Bach and Beethoven, but did not love them. He liked Mozart, but rejected Brahms and Schumann altogether. I heard no comments on Handel, Haydn, Schubert, Reger, and others. Hitler condemned modern music as degenerate art. In opera, Hitler liked -- to a far lesser degree than Wagner -- Puccini's "La Boheme" and "Madama Butterfly", Verdi's "Aida", and Weber's "Der Freischuetz". Richard Strauss did not satisfy him.

Hitler's interest in the theater was almost completely confined to opera and operetta. I have not heard that he attended a dramatic performance after 1936. He enjoyed dancers and good ballet performances. He knew all the better-known conductors and singers, and classified them arbitrarily according to his own taste. This attitude of his must have had bitter results for some artists, since Hitler's evaluations were generalized and treated as the only valid ones. The same goes for movies and movie artists. Hitler was greatly interested in the cinema. At the beginning of the war, every week he saw several films of German and foreign origin. He then suppressed some of them without much ado, while some had to be changed in parts, and others were promoted by all means available. Ordinarily, however, his judgment was in agreement with that of the better class of the German movie audience. As in everything else, Hitler had an outstanding memory for all products and personalities of the stage and screen. From the first day of the war on, Hitler did not attend a single performance of the stage or screen, taking the view that he, as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, must not indulge in that sort of relaxation while millions were fighting at the front. He observed this attitude without compromise.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

01 1/36

For the art critics of the press, Hitler had a dislike which he expressed frequently. The dislike originated in his idea that people who had no creative capabilities themselves should not have the right to make a productive person's life miserable through cheap criticism. For that reason, he had the right of negative criticism curbed to a considerable degree.

Hitler rejected broadcast music completely. To him, radio represented only a means for the dissemination of news and propaganda. He was repelled by radio's inherent impersonal and mechanical qualities. Therefore, so far as I know, he did not attempt to influence radio programs.

Hitler always sought social intercourse with artists. He used to say that of the receptions he used to hold in peacetime, he enjoyed most the evenings with artists. The German artists, on their part, were aware of the fact that since 1933, art in all its fields had been receiving considerable encouragement. Rarely had architects, painters, and sculptors received so many commissions, and rarely had they been able to lead so carefree a life as they did in the years from 1934 to 1939. There has probably rarely been an art exhibition like the annual one in Munich. It was visited by hundreds of thousands of visitors from all walks of life, showing lively interest, and it sold the objects exhibited in record time. The interest in the stage and concerts -- not excluding serious and worthwhile performances -- also reached a degree in the Germany of the years before the war which had never been attained before. This tremendous upswing benefited only those artists who were willing to accept the frequently narrow-minded tutelage of the State, and therefore, in the last analysis, of Adolf Hitler. The others had no chance of public response and success, and, with understandable disgust, either turned their backs on the Third Reich or resignedly refrained from all artistic activities.

e. Family Relations

A characteristic expression of the minute role which Hitler's family played in his life is the fact that only in September 1945 did I come to know about the existence of Hitler's half-brother Alois, although I had been serving in Hitler's surroundings on and off for five years. Actually he never talked in my presence about this brother, who owned a restaurant in Berlin, and he probably had no relations with him. The relations with other members of his family were, so far as I know, of a very superficial nature, and became more so as time went on. When, in July 1936, I took over for the first time Dr Brandt's place as Hitler's accompanying surgeon, Hitler's sister, Frau Raubal, had already relinquished management of the Berghof. Subsequently, I met her and her daughter Friedl only once. In later years, Hitler spoke only rarely of this sister, of whose marriage to Prof Hammitzsch of Dresden he did not approve. From what I heard, occasionally he corresponded with his other sister, Paula, in Vienna, but that relationship was also superficial. I saw this sister only once, on the occasion of Hitler's visit to Vienna in April 1938. His niece, Friedl Raubal, got married before the war and moved to Duesseldorf. Hitler obviously had very close relations with her sister, Geli, who committed suicide in 1931. He never talked about her in the presence of persons not very close to him, so that I didn't hear of her existence until September 1945.

f. Eva Braun

Eva Braun was born about 1912 as the second daughter of a teacher at a trade school in Munich. She attended a lyceum and a convent school, but did not obtain a high school diploma. She then took a job with the main office of the Heinrich Hoffmann Photo Firm, whose owner introduced her to Hitler about 1932. Hitler took a liking to the pretty and lively girl, and frequently invited her and her younger sister Gretl to Berchtesgaden. This was the starting point of a fast-developing relationship based on mutual attachment and confidence, which lacked only official sanction to be called marriage, and which lasted without interruption until the death of both partners.

RESTRICTED

Eva Braun was of medium height, blonde, blue-eyed, and definitely well built. According to popular standards, she was pretty, but her face was rather inexpressive. She knew how to dress well and with good taste. An exaggerated vanity obviously caused her to consider as her main task in life the care of her body and the procurement of an unusual variety of clothes. It probably was the preservation of her outward appearance also, combined with a desire for pleasant pastime, that accounts for her interest in long walks, mountain-climbing, and skiing. She was rather intelligent and quick in repartee. Her character exhibited few pleasant traits, she being arrogant, moody, too positive in her statements, and selfish. Although she called herself in later years the mistress of the Berghof, and although she wanted to be respected as such, she claimed for herself only the rights of that position without attending to the duties connected with it. With the exception of Hitler, the whole household had to execute her wishes, while she hardly occupied herself at all with the lodging and welfare of personnel on duty at the Berghof, nor with the care of the guests. With her personal wishes, and particularly with her complaints about failures to fulfill these wishes, she made life rather miserable for the adjutants. By inviting people of her own choice and by rejecting others, she naturally had considerable influence on the composition of the company at the Berghof; consequently, it was her fault that the spiritual and moral level of the circle, excepting Hitler, was frequently shamefully low.

Whenever Hitler was not at Berchtesgaden, she lived a life of comparative retirement in a suburban house in Munich, where her company apparently was restricted to a certain small circle. Frequently, she visited the theaters and movies, and the rest of the day was probably occupied with the beautician and the dressmaker, as well as with a little light housekeeping and reading. She gave up her job after she met Hitler. Supposedly he had demanded of her that she give up all work, although she is said to have suffered from the lack of duties and to have complained about it. However, against the sincerity of this urge to be active stands the fact that her activity was only apparent and temporary when she resumed work with Hoffmann after the declaration of war.

Whenever Hitler came to Munich, he met Eva Braun either in his apartment on Prinzregenten Platz or in her apartment which she shared with her sister Gretl. On his frequent trips, she never accompanied him, unless it were from Munich to Berchtesgaden. In fact, he was never seen in public with her. During the war, she was not permitted to come to his headquarters, but he called her frequently by telephone. In the Chancellery in Berlin, two rooms were set aside for her only during the last two years of the war. It is surprising that up to the collapse, only a few hundred people in Germany knew what part Eva Braun had played in Hitler's life. It can be explained only by the fact that all the persons who knew of the relationship refrained from the usual gossip out of respect for the Fuehrer.

Hitler treated Eva Braun with great respect and consideration. Before sitting down to a meal, the company always waited until the "lady of the house" had come, even if she were a little late. Getting up from a meal, Hitler invariably kissed her hand. He treated her as a lady at all times, and expected the men of his entourage to do likewise. If occasionally he made fun of her vanity, her positiveness, or other weaknesses, he did it in a friendly, inoffensive way. The "Sie" and "Mein Fuehrer" used by them in the beginning whenever strangers were present was replaced during the last years, even in large circles, by the intimate "Du".

The question arises of what induced Hitler to grant this girl a position next to him, and whether his inner personality would not have developed differently had he found the woman of stature so much desired for him by millions of Germans. From personal remarks he made, one gathered that he was perfectly aware of Eva Braun's shortcomings, although it can be doubted that he had many occasions for comparison with German women representing superiority of mind and character. His niece, Geli Raubal, with whom evidently very close ties had connected him, is

said to have been such a woman. It may be that her memory, continually alive in his heart after her death, excluded the possibility of another woman of superior qualities ever playing a similar role in his life. It may be also that he took the view that a man of high standing should not tie himself to a superior woman. Be that as it may, it was probably almost exclusively a sensual and esthetic attraction that he felt for Eva. He also seems to have recognized gratefully her desire to give him the illusion of a home, if that was at all possible, considering his mode of life.

That Eva Braun loved Hitler with deep devotion can be considered certain. In return, she had to cope with the manifold difficulties and privations caused by her position. Despite the external luxury, there must have lacked a complete fulfillment of her hopes; she hardly ever gave the impression of being happy. Even in peacetime, Hitler could spend only four or five months of the year with her, and then his time was taken up so much that there was little left for her. Although she was treated politely and respectfully by all, she must, quite naturally, have felt the ambiguity of her position. Whether she herself wanted children, I do not know; in any case, they were denied her. Frequently, Hitler expressed his regret that conditions denied him the happiness of having children of his own. One can well imagine how deeply he felt this, when one considers his pleasure in children and the skill with which he treated them. But since he would not make Eva his wife in the open, and since illegitimate children would have destroyed his greatness in the eyes of the German people, he was forced to renounce this personal happiness. Besides, he was of the opinion that the talents of the children of great men usually do not equal those of their parents, so that the obligation of the name frequently makes life very difficult for them.

It is absolutely certain that Hitler was faithful to Eva Braun. His method of living made undetected deviations impossible; also, doubts about her fidelity were never expressed.

Whether Hitler, as has been affirmed, had his relations with Eva legalized shortly before their common death, is actually of no importance for the judgment of the two personalities. It is very well possible that Eva, despite the senselessness of the action, took advantage of the very last moment in order to ensure official recognition from posterity as the woman in Hitler's life. Since the obstacles for her recognition had by then been removed, the situation being hopeless, it can be imagined that Hitler fulfilled this last wish of hers, no matter how unimportant the matter must have been to him at that moment.

Eva Braun probably never had any influence on political affairs, and she always avoided political discussions. Hitler generally did not think much of the political and intellectual capabilities of women, so that his decisions could never have been influenced by women to any great extent. Eva did not even succeed in shaking the position of men in his entourage whom she disliked, like Gen. Schmundt and Prof. Moroll. Nevertheless, her nature, her superficiality, and her lack of real character could not altogether fail to have their effect upon Hitler, considering their long close association. The question then forces itself upon the mind whether this man's heart, character, and faith in humanity would not have developed and expressed themselves in an altogether different way, had fate given him as a companion in Eva Braun's place a woman of superior character and mind.

7. Heusinger: Hitler as a Military Leader

Hitler was born at the southeastern border of the Reich, and he grew up under rather modest conditions. He spent his youth exclusively in Southern Germany and Austria. He was a self-made and self-taught man in all fields, particularly in the military field. He owed his successes primarily to his will power, which overcame all obstacles.

These foundations of origin and development of his personality had a determining influence upon him.

RESTRICTED

OI 2/36

As a Southern German, the character of the North and its representatives were alien to him. He had chosen Frederick II as his ideal, and he recognized the achievements of the North under Bismarck's leadership, but I doubt if he ever came close to understanding of the North. In the military field, this lack of understanding resulted in his unconscious rejection of those military leaders who were of North German origin, and a distrustful attitude towards them. Men like von Fritsch, von Brauchitsch, von Kleist, von Bock, von Manstein, von Kluge, etc. were not to his liking. They too regarded him as a stranger. They were never close to him, especially since they belonged to a stratum of society different from his. He did not feel their equal when dealing with them and, therefore, treated them harshly and without consideration. Besides, as a self-taught man, he had to hold his ground with these "learned generals" and could not rid himself of a feeling of inferiority, or at least of insecurity, for a long time. His pride in being a self-made man caused him to think little of all scientific work, which in the military field is the basic doctrine of the General Staff. This disrespect turned into a veritable hatred of the General Staff as time went on, and it was again a result of Hitler's career. Thus he overestimated will power as opposed to reality. He, whose will power had always broken resistance, saw himself confronted in the General Staff Corps with a group of dispassionate officers, who, without minimizing the factor of human will power, were trying to preserve an attitude of sobriety towards capabilities and possibilities within reach. His distrust of the General Staff and the officers trained by it increased during the first years of the war because his successes after 1936 had been achieved against the warnings of the High Command and the General Staff.

It seems to me that rarely has nature combined greater contrasts in a man as it did in Hitler. Depending upon the aim he wanted to achieve at the moment, one or the other of the following character traits dominated: severity or gentleness; audacity or prudence; trust or distrust; sober calculation or abandonment to illusions; tenacity or hesitation; stubbornness or flexibility. He was unpredictable, and therefore, unfathomable.

He possessed a clever, analyzing mind, a quick power of comprehension, pronounced mathematical gifts, a rare memory, and a clear recognition of the essential. Added to this was an astonishing oratory talent. All these qualities together provided him with a superiority in discussion so pronounced that even generals as quick-witted as von Bock and von Manstein were no match for him. Most of the time, he understood immediately the aim behind a person's report and was able to present his own point of view in such a logical, concise, and irrefutable way that the opponent had to concede defeat. He did not hesitate to exaggerate or even use untruths in order to prove his contentions, and he chose those points which he knew his opponent did not master. He was aided in this by his superior memory and his gift to simplify all problems. In this way, he impressed people all the more. If, despite all his labors, he felt that he had not convinced his opponent, he would introduce political or economic arguments into the military discussion which the soldier was not in a position to refute. For instance, he argued for holding on to the Crimea, for leaving Army Group Nord before Leningrad, and for retaining the Nikolai bridgehead, etc. by pointing out political considerations in connection with Turkey and Finland as well as economic necessities. In Autumn 1943, he immediately saw through the attempt of four field marshals to obtain from him a change of responsibilities in the highest echelons. Before the marshals had a chance to submit their reasons, he evaded the discussion by arguing that only he himself was in a position to view all the political and economic problems connected with the operations on the Eastern Front. In this manner, he succeeded in carrying out his organizational plans against all opposition by presenting a surprising number of statistics from memory, and thus rendering the opponents helpless. His dialectic power and cleverness were complemented by a suggestive power to which especially weak characters succumbed very quickly. I could enumerate many cases where a reporting official had left Hitler in a state of intoxication, so to speak, only to realize the next day that he had fallen victim to dialectics. Even foreign potentates and generals, who most certainly were in no way subordinate to Hitler, experienced this. On numerous occasions, the reporting official did not, despite the most

30
RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

01 1/36

logical and perfect arguments, succeed because he could not achieve a personal contact with Hitler; Hitler then would either cease to listen or shut the official up completely. In order to achieve the greatest possible effects of his own suggestive power, and possibly in order to increase his self-confidence, Hitler preferred a not too small audience whenever such reports had to be made. Frequently he decided in advance who was to attend. He needed the approving nods and the faces of his audience expressing approval. Above all, he needed them whenever he had not yet come to a decision. I have witnessed sessions where he obviously had not yet arrived at a clear decision; he was feeling his way around cautiously in the beginning, slowly convincing himself in a long speech accompanied by signs of approval from his audience, until at the end, he pronounced his irrevocable decision. Goebbels once told Gen Zeitzler that one could get somewhere with Hitler only by talking with him in private. This advice was absolutely right. Hitler did not like a tete-a-tete discussion, but he did not avoid them altogether. When all his powers of suggestion and conviction did not lead to the desired success, he would finally use his authority as the head of the State and Commander in Chief and give a direct order. But in those cases, I think, he did not feel satisfied with himself. I know of cases where he tried again and again, although he had finished the whole matter by giving an order, to convince the Chief of Staff that he was following the right course.

Hitler was unpredictable, dependent upon moods and physical well-being like any other person. Frequently he was gentle and adaptable, but most of the time he was stern and even brutal, incredibly tenacious in clinging to his views, becoming progressively stubborn, and given to illusions. Basically, he may have been a sensitive artistic personality who, through tremendous will power, had managed to cloak himself with an armor of harshness and inflexibility. He became the man of action and will power consciously, realizing that only thus would he be able to attain his chosen goal. During a discussion, nobody could foresee whether it would be held in a normal atmosphere or whether it would lead to one of his much-discussed fits of anger. These fits developed very suddenly and quickly, lasted some time and, with repeated relapses, slackened. On those occasions, Hitler shouted at the top of his voice and used strong, but usually not abusive language. He frequently lost himself in unfounded accusations and partial criticism. His behavior was that of extreme excitement; during the staff meetings, he would fling pencils on the table and pace back and forth in excitement. I was present at several of these incidents. The outbursts were disgraceful. Whether Hitler himself became aware afterwards of his undignified behavior I do not know. As far as the audience was concerned, it could only wait silently until the excitement had subsided so as not to make matters worse. In contrast to this he could occasionally be accessible, grateful for advice and tender-hearted. I remember some occasions when he was still struggling for a decision and agreed gladly and in relief to suggestions that facilitated his decision. I even feel that this human side of his personality should have been taken into account by his entourage more often; much could have been achieved this way. One thing, however, no reporting official could ever do, match his own obstinacy with Hitler's in front of an audience. The results would be disastrous. In such cases, only the tete-a-tete discussion could be recommended. Concerning his harshness and tenacity, Hitler frequently went beyond the limit of the reasonable, especially near the end of the war. The conduct of the war in the East is a perfect example of this. He had adopted at that time certain military doctrines which he would not abandon despite all warnings and bitter experiences. This harshness, developing frequently into brutality, was apparent also in an increasing measure in his actions against officers who, in desperation, had disregarded orders and acted independently. This tenacity in holding on to his aims, combined with his will power, caused him in an ever increasing measure to wander from the field of stark reality into the realm of illusions. Particularly after 1942, he did not want to see the truth anymore, and construed for himself a picture of the situation corresponding to his wishes. He neglected consciously all arguments not fitting into this picture. For instance, in 1943 and 1944, he believed quite seriously in the imminent

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

MGH 888-117

O. R/36

exhaustion of the Russians, and willfully overlooked all calculations of the General Staff. He believed in the possibility of defending the Stalin-grad position until the time that relief could be brought up in March 1943 (at the earliest); he considered it possible to defend the Crimea, the Donets Basin, the Baltic areas, the Salerno bridgehead, and to relieve Budapest, and all this in the face of stern facts contradicting him. I believe that he fled into the realm of illusions because he saw the catastrophe approaching, not because it was a way out and he felt that he must not lose his courage. He distrusted all those who could not follow him into the realm of illusions, who were torn by doubts and scruples, and who knew the end was coming. This distrust was very pronounced with him. There has hardly been anybody in whom he had complete confidence. The smallest occasion would arouse his distrust. However, the disappointments he experienced from his chosen collaborators and the resulting suspicions give rise to serious doubts concerning his knowledge of human nature. It seems to me that his mistake was to judge people by the first impression they made upon him, thus judging them by instinct. Sometimes he hit upon the right man, but frequently he chose persons absolutely unfit for the job. He was often taken in by someone's dapper bearing, good looks, and consciously exhibited optimism.

Hitler's military knowledge was based on his familiarity with military history, his own experiences during World War I, his pronounced technical gifts, certain military doctrines he had adopted, and the psychological understanding of the common soldier.

He lacked the thorough military knowledge gained through hard work, the indispensable tool of every military leader. He had never even tried to acquire it through study. He had read the works of Frederick the Great, Napoleon and Moltke, but had not worked his way through them from the point of view of a General Staff officer. Consequently, he had not succeeded in penetrating into the deeper strata of military thinking. As a result, it is not surprising that he arrived frequently at wrong conclusions. This superficial knowledge of military history was complemented by his own experiences during World War I, but these too were one-sided: he had known only the war of position in the West, and that only from the point of view of the common soldier. He could not but lack the understanding for the big picture. He remembered vividly from that time how conditions at the front were, and what was on the infantryman's mind. However, this knowledge of conditions at the front was not sufficient anymore for the analysis of the altogether different conditions in this war. In the beginning, he tried to gain some knowledge on the state of affairs at the front through occasional personal visits, and later through reports by front-line officers. However, both of these systems could not prevent his loss of contact with the front. As a result, he gradually lost control of the quality and capabilities of the instrument he was commanding.

Hitler had a thorough knowledge of the technical field. He knew weapons and their effects in every detail, and in many cases he knew them better than his generals. His excellent memory gave him a good advantage in this respect. He also had the imagination necessary to be ahead of new developments and was, consequently, in a position to make frequent suggestions.

On the other hand, he lacked all interest in the training of the soldier. He believed that it could be replaced to a large degree by moral qualities. This criminal neglect of training problems in the Army during the war led to ever increasing losses after 1942.

In questions of discipline also, he tended too much towards the ideal conception of a discipline based upon common volition and thinking. Later on, he had to realize that only iron compulsion and categorical orders can hold the troops together in difficult situations.

In the tactical field he had adopted certain axioms, partly stemming from his own front-line experiences, partly based on our tactical doctrine, but also partly derived from the misunderstood principles and theories of

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

OS SR/36

great military figures. Some of these axioms contributed to the undoing of the German Army after 1943. They culminated in the following theses: defense in the East has to be carried out rigidly, with no piece of ground given up voluntarily, since only in this manner can the Russians be exhausted; each salient must be held to the last in these operations: this plan ties up hostile forces and obliges the enemy to deploy his manpower; any retreat undermines the morale of the troops; any construction of secondary defense positions weakens the will of the troops in front of them to resist. With these theories, he ordered the rigid execution of the war in the East after the end of 1942, which resulted in the annihilation of scores of German divisions. This rigid defense did not exhaust the Russians, but we exhausted ourselves. We tied down our own forces in salients, while the Russians had freedom of movement. A prepared retreat would not have been detrimental to the morale of the troops, while a retreat forced upon them by the enemy was dangerous. The construction of secondary defense positions is a necessity, and their neglect is a crime of the military leader. It was always impossible to make Hitler comprehend all these reasons opposed to his own theories. He wasn't even aware of his mistakes when his tactics failed. He explained them as the failures of the military leaders and the troops. He adhered to these theories, and he was certain he was doing the right thing, and could not be convinced that he was wrong. I frequently felt that he might be expecting the tide to turn by some intervention from above, which would suddenly prove that he was right after all. At any rate, his stubbornness became increasingly incomprehensible, and justified doubts about his sanity.

As a whole, it must be said that Hitler's military knowledge was that of a self-taught man and, consequently, superficial. Had he listened to his advisers, events might have taken a different turn. He also possessed another characteristic of the self-taught, namely to consider himself and his views infallible. It may also be that he felt it was incompatible with his position of authority to admit mistakes and make his decisions accordingly.

Because of this, Hitler's methods of leadership were naturally strongly influenced. They were dominated by three leading principles:

- a. Divide and conquer. There should not be too much power for any single person. It must be possible to play one man against the other.
- b. Distrust everybody.
- c. Confidence in his own military abilities and the conviction that only he was capable of mastering all problems.

The reasons for these ideas originated in Hitler's career, specifically the fact that he was self-taught, and his successes since 1936. The consequences were terrible. The first principle, divide and conquer, led to the impossible command structure where responsibilities were divided between as many persons as possible, so that no one person had a complete view. His distrust of everyone resulted in the constant change of commanders of army groups and armies. But above all, this distrust, combined with the confidence in his own abilities, eliminated the old principle of leadership in the field. It had been a customary and tested method in the German Army to tell the subordinate commander in an order what to do, leaving it to him how to do it. Under Hitler's leadership, this was changed. From his high position he ordered how things were to be done in all detail, thus depriving the commanders of all independence and freedom of action. In other words, he led the gigantic fronts the way one leads a regiment. Because he concentrated a maze of little details, Hitler lost his judgment of the situation as a whole. The difficulty was further augmented when commanders of army groups, etc. would not shoulder the responsibilities of any big decision. It was shown in World War I that the power of the leaders is bound to increase in the course of a long war, but under Hitler it was carried beyond bearable limits.

Count Schlieffen, the German Chief of Staff before World War I, once said that only "a drop of Solomon's anointing oil" could ordain a man to

RESTRICTED

be a great general. He wanted to indicate through this word the operative spark, the intuitive sensitivity enabling the general to do the right thing in every situation without long reflection; this is a gift bestowed on very few men. Hitler did not possess this spark, but he did have good operative gifts. He could frequently find instinctively the right solution of a problem. For instance, he had conceived the plan for the campaign of 1940 in the West all by himself, and had discussed it afterwards with von Manstein and Halder, who had similar ideas about it. Frequently, though, his operative ideas were absurd. His reflections were strongly influenced by the following factors: a belief in his intuition, a tendency to enter the realm of illusions, bold planning, and frequent neglect of time, space, and forces available.

Through the belief in his intuition and abandonment to illusions, he had presented the situation to himself according to his hopes, desires, and intentions. He took up avidly any argument which tended to confirm his picture, even the most insignificant one. He rejected any objections, even the most weighty ones, as insignificant if they did not fit into his picture. Thus, he did what a military leader must never do, he abandoned the firm foundation of reality and deceived himself with a mirage. I shall name only a few examples of this: the mirage of the disintegrating Soviet-Anglo-American coalition; his opinion of the Russian armed forces in 1940 and after 1943; the Stalingrad illusion; the Caucasus dream; the picture of the situation in the Crimea and in the North in 1944; the hope for a success in the Ardennes; the mirage of a delivered Budapest etc. It is obvious that the more difficult the situation became, the more he tended towards illusions.

When, however, he was able to plan freely and weigh carefully all operational possibilities, he always displayed a large measure of tactical boldness. The campaigns in Norway, in the West in 1940, and in the Balkans are examples of this. However, boldness was frequently apparent only in the planning. In the execution of the plan, he developed a great measure of caution. He did not want to take any risks, hesitated, and ordered operations to be stopped. Dunkirk in 1940 and Leningrad in 1941 are examples of his interference with operations where the results were grave. He was prepared to give up Narvik too, but the British discontinued the operation first.

Above all, he lacked the understanding for coordination of operational aims, forces available, space, and time.

All in all, Hitler possessed a good military talent, though not the divine spark. He lacked the military education, especially its doctrine of confidence in professionally schooled advisors and subordinate commanders.

8. Lippert: Impressions of Hitler

I am of the opinion that Hitler, from about 1934 on, was possessed by a kind of exaggerated faith in himself, a kind of Messiah-complex. I saw Hitler for the first time in 1926, and talked to him for the first time in 1929. In those conferences, I was struck and impressed by the quality which made him so impressive, that quiet clarity which one expects in a great personality. Later, in 1934, during the Roehm revolt, I was struck by his terrifying state of excitement. I hoped then that this was an exceptional occurrence. However, I was more and more startled to see that, progressively, he would resent being contradicted or even criticized. During the conferences I had with him, I could see that he had preconceived opinions; that it was senseless to give him a report in order to find out his opinion about it. He had already made up his mind, and would have been offended if one hadn't followed him. This conviction of his own infallibility explained to me the otherwise inexplicable composition of his entourage. They were good enough for court jesters, but not for service as closest collaborators of a great statesman. I have

RESTRICTED

always been trying to find the psychological key to his actions, and came to consider him possessed with the idea of being destined to accomplish something extraordinary*.

I had the feeling that he tried to date everything from the day of his accession to power. That is shown, for example, in the fact that he did not show any interest in Prussian tradition, indicated by the abolition of the old guard regiments. Their place was taken by SS guard units. In place of the Corps of Cadets there were the Adolf Hitler schools. He was annoyed by the fact that Prussia, in contrast to Bavaria, had a long-standing tradition, which is why he was not interested in it. He was a Southern German in his whole mental make-up, and he certainly felt better and more at home when he was in Southern Germany. This is indicated by the fact that he spent much more time there than in the North.

9. Riecke: Hitler and Agriculture

Hitler's primary interests in agriculture were problems involving food supply, and secondarily, the details of mechanization. He looked upon this situation with the consumer's point of view. His speeches on the occasion of the annual Thanks giving rallies on the Bueckeberg were therefore not only expressions of gratitude to the farmers for their accomplishments during the past year, but also appeals for an increase in production. (Incidentally, these rallies were organized by the Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, and not by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.) Influenced by Ley, Hitler viewed the development of the Volksschlepper (standard tractor) as the first and foremost means of lowering the cost of production. However, it was not understood that for the profitable use of the tractor, the land on many farms must be reappropriated and ameliorated. As far as I know, Hitler knew nothing about the problem that would arise from splitting the land up into unreasonably small plots, a problem so decisive in Southern, Southwestern and Eastern Germany.

During the war, Hitler's interest was limited even more than before to problems dealing solely with food supply. Every change in rations had to be submitted to him, and in most cases, reported on in detail. On these occasions, Hitler often went into the minutest details. In his speeches during the war, agriculture was mentioned only briefly compared with fields of much less importance. It did not receive much gratitude or recognition. During the last two years, Hitler is supposed to have stated many times that he did not have to worry about agriculture, since he felt he could trust Backe completely.

Another of Hitler's characteristic traits was that when any controversy on the use of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes was submitted to him, he presumptively decided against the protesting representatives of agriculture. This was the case even when less valuable land could have been used, as in the case of the Volkswagen factory in Fallersleben.

If one has some knowledge of Hitler's personality, his lack of understanding for agricultural problems is not surprising. His habits -- staying up and working until late at night, the late start of his working day, and his neglect to exercise in the open air -- are all unpleasantlike qualities. His main interests were in the architectural, artistic, technical, and, especially during the war, military fields. I do not know of one instance when Hitler inspected a farm nearly as thoroughly as an art exhibit or an automobile factory. He let the agricultural leaders alone as long as their actions did not interfere with other fields which he considered more urgent, but he did not use his power to the benefit of agriculture. It was for this reason that agriculture was forced into the background in decisive matters. Moreover, the leading personalities of the Party, Hess, as well as Bormann and Ley, saw in agriculture just a group of sentimentalists who always wanted special treatment for themselves.

* Dr Morell reports that Hitler had repeatedly said, "I shall become the greatest man in history. I have to attain immortality, even if the whole German nation perishes in the process."

RESTRICTED

10. Schmidt: Hitler and Foreign Visitors

Whenever Hitler received foreign visitors after 1935, the Foreign Office detailed me to act as his interpreter or secretary, except in cases when the visitors were military leaders. I used to arrive with these guests at Hitler's headquarters at Berchtesgaden and leave with them as soon as the meeting was over, so that I had little or no opportunity of seeing Hitler alone or speaking to him in the absence of his foreign guests. My personal impressions of him are, therefore, almost exclusively drawn from his behavior in the presence of foreigners. I have little information about his attitude in his relations with his German advisors and friends.

I have always found it impossible to explain his enigmatic personality either to myself or to others; except by resorting to the expedient of defining him as a case of split personality. There seemed to be no other way of accounting for the inexplicable contrasts which manifested themselves in his words and actions.

There was on the one hand the kind-hearted, well-educated, art-loving man; the historian, strategist, and philosopher with an astonishing knowledge of the technical and economic problems, who could be a charming host and who treated not only his guests, but also his advisors and subordinates with great courtesy and consideration. But there was also another Hitler, the brutal, ruthless, self-appointed supreme judge of the German people; the man of 30 June 1934, the inhuman fanatic, who persecuted his enemies with relentless hatred and pursued his political or strategic ideas regardless of the cost in human suffering and material destruction; the eternal amateur who stubbornly refused to have his own preconceived views essentially influenced by expert experience; the man of personal prestige who believed himself to be a man of destiny and turned out to be the agent of Germany's destruction.

In my personal contacts, I was chiefly concerned with the first Hitler, the perfect gentleman, catching only occasional glimpses, particularly during the later years of the war, of the inhuman aspects of his strange character. These aspects sometimes revealed themselves through an impatient gesture or a few explosive words uttered with a striking suddenness as if, for a split second only, a veil were being torn away from a normally well-camouflaged picture, representing a fantastic and unreal landscape on another planet in the supernatural twilight of the outer universe.

Apart from these passing moments, there was nothing unusual about Hitler's behavior in the presence of his foreign visitors. He received them as any other head of a government would welcome delegates from another country. If there was a difference, it was the absence of formalities. In the meetings at which I was present, there were no angry scenes, no outbursts and no shouting, as it was so often described in the international press. Everything was rather quiet and conversational. Hitler only raised his voice occasionally to emphasize particular points, or when he imagined himself addressing an absent person who might possibly be one of the major enemies. But the moments when his temper carried him away were comparatively rare, and passed quickly. The man in the conference room was indeed very different from the hoarse-voiced, screaming platform speaker or the broadcaster in his more vulgar outbursts. One rather remarkable feature, however, was the fact that Hitler was not a very good listener. He did most of the talking himself and more often than not indulged in lengthy accounts of either the history of National Socialism or post-war developments as they affected Germany, beginning with the Treaty of Versailles, and ending with his own advent to power and his achievements during the time of his government. What he said on such occasions was more or less identical with what he kept repeating over and over again in public speeches. These and other topics of a general character invariably formed the first part of any conversation, particularly in the years before the outbreak of the war. It was almost like an obsession. It goes without saying that his favorite subjects, like the Jews or the deficiencies of the democratic regimes, were also introduced at one moment or the other and dealt with at some length. Thus it happened that the business of the meeting was

RESTRICTED

01- 16

not taken up until the time allotted for the visit was almost over. Bad timing and an almost complete lack of debating discipline were characteristic of most of these interviews, which were far more in the nature of a miniature Sportspalast meeting where Hitler spoke and the audience kept quiet or registered agreement, than of a genuine exchange of opinions. Dissenting views were either ignored or resented. Like all dictators, Hitler was constitutionally a poor partner in debate as well as in an alliance or in a political agreement, because the qualities of partnership and compromise would have been more of an obstacle than an aid in his rise to the head of an authoritarian movement. The lack of these qualities explains both his earlier success and his ultimate downfall.

However, this method of unilateral conversation often produced the desired effect. It left the visitor more or less deeply impressed, for although Hitler was an unsatisfactory debating partner, he was an excellent reporter of his own theories. It was obvious to all who listened to him that he must have carefully considered the particular problem under discussion and studied all its aspects very carefully. He had all the figures and facts at his fingertips and produced his arguments at a moment's notice from an apparently abundant knowledge of the subject. At such moments, there seemed to be nothing artificial about his reasoning. Everything appeared to be plausible and perfectly logical. Thus his listeners came under his spell, which was enormously enhanced by the contrast between his impression of relative normality at interviews, and the distorted versions of his character made by his fanatical followers and anti-Hitler propaganda. This impression was due chiefly to his brilliant phrasing of the more technical problems of economic, political, and military importance. His glibness often caused great, if only temporary conviction. On these occasions, the logical and plausible thinking he displayed was in direct contrast to an exposition of his theories on the racial issue or the Anglo-Saxon world, which were too widely divergent from the generally accepted truth to be accepted even in the most accomplished and alluring context. In the latter case, the famous spell remained ineffective, while it manifested itself very distinctly and visibly in the former. For instance, Mussolini had sent Count Ciano to Berchtesgaden in August 1939 to warn Hitler not to furnish a pretext for war to the war mongers of the Western Democracies by excessive demands on Poland. After he had valiantly defended his father-in-law's opinion for twenty-four hours, Ciano broke down under Hitler's spell, and his brilliant debating power deserted him. On the second day, he took his leave of Hitler saying that the German Chancellor, who had been right so often when Italy had had different views, could possibly be right this time also when he prophesied that neither England nor France would go to war. I mention this as one of the most remarkable and tragical cases of Hitler's astonishing influence on his visitors. On the other hand, I do not remember a single case where Hitler succeeded in convincing a foreign visitor of the soundness of his anti-Jewish views, except where the visitor was already a confirmed anti-Semite.

In general, one may say that visitors from Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian countries were less easily impressed than those of Mediterranean origin (including France), while those who were most impressed were interviewers from the Balkans. It is difficult to classify the Russians because Hitler had only one interview with Molotov, a rather unsatisfactory one, but it is more than likely that the admiration he had for Stalin until the end of the war was fully reciprocated by the latter at the time of the Russo-German agreement of 1939. However, I was able to satisfy myself that very few of his visitors completely escaped his spell. Mr Eden, Lord Halifax, and Lord Vansittart are among these notable exceptions. It sounds paradoxical that Franco should have been negatively impressed at his Hendaye meeting with Hitler in 1940, but it was due to the adverse circumstances under which the meeting was held (inadequate preparation, bad timing, and the sudden reversal of Germany's policy toward Spain at the very moment when the two leaders met). Therefore, one can sum up the situation without fear of exaggeration by saying that Hitler exercised a great or small influence on the great majority of his

RESTRICTED

visitors. However, the influence tended to disappear again, either immediately or some time after the meeting, when Hitler's reasonings and forecasts failed to resist the tests of impartial analysis and hard reality, and when his remarkable rhetoric could no longer exercise its effect. From the above description, it is clear that in the normal course of any interview with Hitler, his visitors had relatively little opportunity to express their own opinion, but somehow they always managed to put in an observation or two. Of course, conditions were somewhat different at the larger multilateral conferences like Munich, where all the delegates were given ample time to develop their ideas. Their influence on Hitler, however, was negligible. He did not allow outside opinions to influence his own line of thought, even less his decisions, except on matters of detail. As in home affairs, Hitler had things very much his own way in foreign affairs also. Although he listened politely to the other speakers, he hardly ever showed signs of losing patience, and he remained adamant. Whenever he thought it useless to continue a discussion, he had a way of breaking off a conversation rather abruptly without hurting the other man's feelings.

Mussolini was one of the outstanding personalities who visited him most frequently. I was not present at all these interviews. They often talked alone, but whenever the foreign ministers or other advisors were called in, I acted as secretary, and sometimes as interpreter. These meetings usually followed the pattern previously described. They were rather striking examples of the theory that Hitler was not to be influenced. I can remember no major problem where Mussolini succeeded in changing Hitler's mind. Apart from Mussolini's aforementioned efforts at the outbreak of war, he constantly advocated a more reasonable policy toward the Roman Catholic Church. Later he suggested a settlement with Russia and a more elastic European policy on the basis of a voluntary cooperation of the European nations that he wanted to unite in a federation. He failed completely to impress Hitler in these and other proposals. Hitler dismissed them without much comment.

The only exception in this respect was Antonescu, with whom Hitler had many talks, some of which might be defined as the nearest approach to a real discussion. The latter's political suggestions concerning a settlement with the Western powers and the concentration of all available forces in the East were not even considered.

Hitler's indifference to the opinions of others was even more pronounced in the case of Germany's smaller allies and satellites. It is common knowledge that the statesmen from the Western countries had no influence at all on him, and this was tragically confirmed in the years after the Munich Conference.

If Hitler's attitude was rather autocratic at all conferences dealing with immediate political, military, and other questions, he was on the contrary considerably more open to other people's opinions when non-controversial subjects were dealt with, such as historical and artistic problems and theories. On such occasions, he was at his best. Apart from the usual perfection with which he formulated his own theories, he surprised his visitors by the readiness with which he considered their opposing opinions, and by his qualities of an attentive and well-informed listener.

11. Schwerin: My Personal Impression of Hitler

Twice I had personal contact with Hitler, both occasions being for the reception of decorations presented only by Hitler. I would have liked to avoid meeting him because I considered him solely responsible for the outbreak of this fatal war and its amateurish execution, to say nothing of his political blunders. In spite of my firm dislike, I was afraid of being influenced by him in some way, for I had heard of the extraordinary human warmth and amiability with which he sometimes received strangers. Even more, I was afraid that he might take a liking to me, and then possibly separate me from the front-line troops, which I considered the only place for a decent and justly thinking soldier.

RESTRICTED

C BR/36

In May 1943, while home on furlough from the Eastern Front, I received the order to report to the Berghof. When I arrived there, Maj Engel, Hitler's military adjutant, informed me of how I must act. After stepping down to the Fuehrer's office, I was to report with my name and rank, then the Fuehrer would approach and present the decoration, followed by a short conversation. I should speak freely and frankly, which Hitler liked from front officers.

The style of the Berghof pleased me, with its lack of glamor, ostentation, and display of servants. The whole, including the buildings and the furniture of the Fuehrerhaus, made a simple, respectable, and dignified impression. The SS orderlies looked intelligent and thoroughly trained, and were well groomed. The only thing I had to criticize was a somewhat cold and impersonal touch.

After Engel called for me, we stepped down into Hitler's vast study, well known for its large window. Hitler was standing near it, and I reported to him as instructed. He came toward me with slow and somewhat tired steps, a man bent by a heavy burden. At that moment, a wave of infinite sympathy came over me, stronger than anything I had ever experienced. It was of such intensity that it possessed me throughout the interview, and gave me a feeling of great inner confidence, if not superiority. It was as though a voice were saying to me, "Look at this poor, bent old man. He isn't able to carry the load he has taken upon his shoulders." Hitler came up to me, and with deep amazement I looked into his dull, tired eyes of an unnatural faded blue. No doubt they were sick eyes. Hitler talked to me in a deep, sonorous voice, and with great warmth. What he said was simple, dignified, and human, and raised within me a reciprocal sentiment of human feeling. It might be said that this scene was studied. If so, undoubtedly this man was a great actor who knew how to play his role with great conviction. In any case, I felt certain that a human understanding had been established between us.

After the award of the decoration, Hitler shook hands with me, and under the influence of the mutual sympathy I felt with him, I took his hand in a firm grip. I didn't hold a strong or kind hand, as I had expected, but something soft and feminine, like a shell-less mollusk. I was terrified to such an extent that for a moment I was out of breath; I had the feeling that I had heedlessly crushed something unpleasant in my hand. We separated, and I overcame my confusion. Hitler then sat down in an easy chair at the well-known round table and asked me to sit down at his side. Engel took a seat opposite him, and we three were alone.

Hitler and I developed a conversation which lasted for about half an hour, with Engel listening. I don't recall the exact course of this conversation, but we talked of purely military subjects. I had prepared three questions which I wanted to discuss in the common interest of the front troops. Without any effort, I succeeded in turning the conversation so that all three could be treated thoroughly. I made the observation that Hitler very easily gets into a sort of lecturing, but that he could be interrupted without difficulty, provided one chose the proper moment and had something to say that interested him. At once, he discontinued lecturing and listened quietly and with great attention, and I even had the impression that he didn't mind being interrupted, as though he were pleased that for once he didn't have to do the talking.

Hitler didn't like to hear unpleasant things. I reported, for instance, that since other defensive weapons were lacking, my division had been using the Russian 7.62 antitank guns equipped with German sights, and that they had proved to be excellent. The whole division was now equipped with such guns. While I was telling this, I noticed that Hitler was inwardly starting up in anger. He then said somewhat abruptly that the German 7.5 antitank gun was better than the Russian. I agreed, but added that unfortunately this fact didn't help as much because we had none and weren't able to procure any. At this point, I expected an outburst on Hitler's part, but it didn't come. He swallowed the bitter pill silently, and I went on to speak of other matters. I had the clear impression that any man who had to tell Hitler unpleasant things frequently was not in an enviable position.

RESTRICTED

I found Hitler's great special knowledge of the subjects discussed completely confirmed. He spoke from a point of view which was as close to mine as that of a front-line soldier. In all my statements, I could be sure that he grasped the cardinal points and evaluated them expertly. He made no decisions at the time, so I felt sure that my remarks were being pondered, although I couldn't vouch for what might happen later on. In criticizing, I discovered that one could be very frank. For instance, he allowed me to say that Guderian, who had just been appointed Commander of the Armored Force, was not acquainted with recent Russian developments and thus would be unable to understand the important lessons learned on that front.

My second meeting with Hitler took place in March 1944, again at the Berghof. This meeting proceeded in the same manner as the previous one, except that there was no conversation. Hitler made attempts to be cordial, but I could see that his thoughts were elsewhere. He seemed much older than before.

12. Schwerin von Krosigk: Hitler

a. Appearance and Manner

I met Hitler for the first time when I joined his cabinet in January 1933. I cannot say that on this or later occasions I was particularly impressed or fascinated by him. I noticed, above all, the almost complete lack of any feature that could mark him handsome, attractive, or strikingly interesting. Only the intense blue color of his eyes gave his face expression and character, and his hands had the delicateness and beauty of an artist's. The simplicity and neatness of his appearance was pleasing; nothing was ostentatious, except, perhaps, the lock of hair falling onto his forehead, or the moustache. During the first meetings I had with him, I noticed a strange embarrassment, which probably appeared because he did not yet know me well. I believe that it was difficult for him to get along with new acquaintances, and others have confirmed this opinion. He dissembled this embarrassment with a certain liveliness, and in such a situation would deliver long monologues, frequently on topics not pertinent to the discussion. An additional end served by these monologues may have been that, disliking financial problems, he sought to postpone consideration of such unpleasant matters and so shorten the time left for their discussion. It was then very difficult to lead him back to the problem at hand.

b. Intellectual Ability

In cabinet meetings one could not but recognize and admire the qualities which gave him mastery of all discussions: his infallible memory, which enabled him to answer with the utmost precision questions on the remotest problems under consideration; his presence of mind in the discussions; the clarity with which he could extract the essential of a problem and reduce the most intricate question to a simple -- sometimes too simple -- formula; and his skill in summing up concisely the results of a long debate; his cleverness in approaching a well-known and long-discussed problem from a new angle. In his manner of unveiling a problem gradually until he had bared all its details, he reminded one of Bruening, who, however, attempted to re-form the details in their proper relation to the larger problem. Bruening did not arrive at a decision easily; but when the decision was made, it was a thoroughly considered one. Hitler, on the other hand, having unveiled the problem, relied on his intuition to provide a quick decision. Frequently he could recognize in an instant the right steps to be taken, but often, too -- sometimes in his most important decisions -- his intuition proved its fallibility.

c. Effect Upon Others

The suggestive power emanating from Hitler could not but influence me, just as it influenced others. This power seemed to me to stem from the enthusiasm and conviction expressed by his every word. If the simplest word uttered by the simplest person is impressive when spoken with deep

RESTRICTED

- 136

and full conviction, would not the word of a demonic person carry a power of inescapable persuasion? People with intelligences far above the average believed in utterances of the Fuehrer even after these utterances had been contradicted by his later words and actions. Hitler had the dangerous gift of autosuggestion; when he spoke, he abandoned himself to the impetus of his own words and thoughts and maintained a full and unshakable belief in the veracity of his own statements. I have seen occasions when Hitler succeeded in changing completely the convictions of men of vision and will power who had been steadfastly determined to oppose his views. During the war, statesmen and generals of allied countries came to Hitler resolved to speak out severe criticisms or to insist on certain demands. They left the reception room relieved and encouraged, without having had the chance to express their views. Lloyd George, after leaving Hitler, saluted the people outside the room with "Heil Hitler" and said that he did this because "Hitler is really a great man". Lord Lothian, who had been very adverse and critical in his attitude toward Hitler, was changed by a meeting with the Fuehrer and subsequently used the same words as Lloyd George. The enthusiasm and enchantment aroused by Hitler's suggestive power usually passed away after a short period of time, but occasionally the subject remained permanently entranced. In any case, few persons were capable of saying in the Fuehrer's presence what they had intended to say in the manner they had intended to say it.

d. Judgment of Character

Hitler's lack of knowledge of human nature was striking. He was not incapable of judging people; sometimes he could judge men very quickly and characterize them precisely. Relying completely on his intuition, he would often pass judgment on the basis of the first impression he got of a person. In some cases, he was surprisingly accurate; in others, he made amazing blunders. In any case, the sympathetic or antipathetic feelings aroused in him by the first impression remained, and his judgment was not revised. Even when the inadequate qualifications of a man he had appointed to a high position could no longer escape his notice, Hitler could not bring himself to dismiss the man. He was prevented from taking such a step not only by his extremely great sense of loyalty and gratitude, but also by his refusal to admit a past mistake. He feared that the admission of mistakes could result only in a loss of respect for his authority.

e. Social Conduct

In the personal discussions I had with Hitler, he was at all times very polite and always preserved control of his countenance, even when he was contradicted and became excited. He always addressed me as "Herr Reichsminister". At parties, at the annual banquet he gave, and at receptions, he moved dextrously and tactfully. He did not hesitate to kiss a lady's hand, a gesture which most National Socialists considered a heritage from reactionary times. He seemed to like women to talk to him about their children and family without restraint. My wife, who saw him only on official occasions, talked to him in such a manner whenever she happened to be seated next to him. She remained calm in his presence, unlike many other women; consequently, he was, she told me, quite human and natural in his conversation.

f. Conduct With Children

Hitler appeared most human and charming when he was confronting children. There were always families with many children among the crowds congratulating him on his birthday. It was really nice to see how Hitler's face, so frequently tense and mask-like, relaxed in the presence of children, how it assumed the expression of genuine friendliness and kindness. At the last anniversary reception my family attended, the Fuehrer passed the bouquet which my youngest child had given him to his chief adjutant, Brueckner, who was standing behind him. My child -- about three years old at that time -- went to Brueckner and took back the bouquet. Hitler thought that she did not want to part with the flowers, but my wife explained to him that the child wanted Hitler himself to keep them.

RESTRICTED

Hitler took the bouquet again and said that even in the smallest girl lay hidden the woman who would infallibly show us the right thing to do. He was then embarrassed by my child, who asked where his "Aufbau" was. ("Aufbau" can be translated approximately as "construction".) Hitler was obviously thinking only of the construction of the Reich or its capital, and he turned questioningly to my wife. My wife said that the child only wanted to know where his presents were exhibited.

g. Financial Opinions

Hitler had little understanding of financial matters. He said that during the struggle for power, the Party treasurer had repeatedly warned him of a dearth of funds, and that he, considering these warnings born of panic, had gone ahead with whatever plans he had, and in the end there had always been enough money. He also said that he considered himself a statesman, and could not allow his plans to be wrecked by lack of funds. I tried to explain to Hitler the difference between the procurement of funds for a party and the taxation of a population, but he was in no way impressed. He disposed of inflation by saying that such a thing cannot occur under a strong government. On the other hand, he had a good understanding of the fact that expenditures must be balanced by revenues, and that the cash on hand should be dispensed expeditiously. As time went on, however, he began to abandon thrift and permitted the most extravagant appropriations.

h. Ideas on Social Improvement

During discussions of the financing of the Autobahns, Hitler explained that he intended them to be both the arteries of and the incentive to the future era of motorization. With these good roads, more people would want to drive, and this could be done in the new cheap Volkswagen, "the car for the little man". Hitler went on to speak of his plans for eliminating class struggle and defeating the appeal of Communism by giving each man a little plot of land, if nothing more than a garden, which would afford the individual satisfaction as a man of property and a participant in the union with the soil. The Volkswagen would raise everyone to the level of a gentleman and allow him a sense of freedom from his immediate environment. Hitler had a vivid picture of the end of an urban man's weekend: he returns from the country on an overcrowded train, suffering the discomfort of no space, damage to his clothes, and a reversal of the beneficial effects of the rural outing.

i. The Autobahns

As with many of Hitler's intentions and plans, the basic purpose for the construction of the Autobahns was good. The mistake was that Hitler went beyond reasonable limits. He wanted to surpass road-construction accomplishments of other strong states, such as the Roman, Incan, and Napoleonic. His highways were to be a gigantic network extending over the entire country, and they should be able to last for centuries as an immutable symbol of the strength of the government that had constructed them. He was not satisfied with a plan submitted by his transportation experts calling for improvement of the existing secondary roads, which was necessary for enriching the rural economy. He had no understanding of agricultural problems because he possessed only an urban point of view, and, therefore, he did not foresee the depopulation of rural areas after the construction of the Autobahns.

j. Architectural Ambitions

On my first visit to Hitler in the new Chancellery, I was able to speak of my business only in passing because he had a large blueprint spread out on the floor. It was his plan for the rebuilding of Berlin. He described enthusiastically the grand scale on which the Hohenzollerns had planned to build the city, and how their pusillanimous successors had ignored their vision and created a city with narrow streets and no great vistas. He now wanted to realize the Hohenzollern intentions, declaring

that as the traffic problem had to be settled anyway, it might as well be done thoroughly by constructing broad avenues on east-west and north-south axes, supplemented by concentric rings. A makeshift solution of the traffic problem would be temporary, necessitating further measures at a later date, whereas a reconstruction of the city would remove the problem forever. As he talked, the feeling grew in me that architecture was his proper sphere of activity, and that he wanted to become famous in that field. To my objections about the cost of such a project, he replied that all sources would be tapped to finance it, and that I must not forget that Berlin would become the destination of millions of foreign travelers, who would bring in revenue that could be used to defray part of the expense. He also said that he didn't know whether he was going to live to an advanced age, but he wanted to see a rebuilt Berlin before his death, a Berlin with buildings both beautiful and well constructed, a combination which he maintained had not occurred in the past. As examples of good buildings, he pointed to the Platz der Bewerung and the Haus der Kunst in Munich, and the Chancellery in Berlin, all constructed under his auspices since 1933. He considered himself fortunate in having two architects of genius, Troost and Speer.

k. Artistic Tastes

There is little I can say about Hitler's views about the arts except what I have already said of his architectural projects. Unquestionably, architecture was his favorite art and the one in which he believed himself most competent. However, in other of the fine arts as well, he considered his own views authoritative. His taste inclined toward the grandiose, as can be clearly seen in his predilection for the sculptures of Thorak and Brocker. Many people assailed his opinions on painting; but his reaction against symptoms of degeneration which pervaded painting after World War I was a sound, healthy attitude and was shared by a majority of the German people. However, Hitler's pronouncements were not limited to a condemnation of these degenerate works; he attacked some paintings which were true works of art and approved others which certainly were not true art. Over German art Hitler established a popery from whose infallible decrees there was no appeal. In his speeches he frequently declared that the free power of creation was the only basis for art in Germany, but in practice he continually curtailed any such freedom.

l. Religious Attitude

Hitler's attitude toward religion was strongly influenced by his origin. In his native region a bigoted variety of Catholicism is said to be prevalent. In reaction to this environment, Hitler, as a youth, may have become alienated from all religious creeds. He certainly had no understanding of North German Protestantism. To Hitler, the Church seemed a purely human institution in which dangerous "Pfaffen", dominated by a lust for power, were at work. Hitler recognized the existence of a few honorable priests and parsons, and always made a distinction between these and the others, for whom he reserved the term "Pfaffen" -- a term he used with an implication of contempt, and applied to Bishop Count Galen, Pastor Niemöller, and their kind. Hitler was not, however, an enemy of Christianity; he always spoke of Christ with reverence, but regarded his teachings as temporary. And he was a strong advocate of religion in general. During one cabinet meeting, he spoke for two hours on the subject. He said that any man who lost his faith in God became an atheist and prey to Bolshevism, and for this reason, it was imperative that the German people retain their faith. In countries such as Russia and Spain, where the emphasis had shifted from the basic precepts to the outward symbols, the danger of losing faith was everpresent. He hoped that in time the German cathedrals would conduct services for the communicants of a purified religion. He reminded his followers that the Party's mission was political, not religious, and that no attempts should be made to establish him as a messiah. He wanted to form a Protestant national church.

m. Hitler and Hindenburg

During the period of Hitler's collaboration with Hindenburg, their relations improved from a mutual reticence to a mutual respect and confidence.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

Hitler was greatly moved by Hindenburg's death, which he expressed in the cabinet meeting following it. He also said that Hindenburg had told him to stick by the English and distrust the Italians, although Hitler hoped at a later date to effect an alliance with Italy. He also declared that under the current Fuehrer state, both a president and chancellor were unnecessary; possibly in the future, the two positions might become useful again, but so long as he remained in power it was absurd to have more than one.

n. Administrative Policy

Hitler had no interest in administrative problems. He believed that any difficulties arising in the administrative field could be remedied by changing personnel or creating new departments. This latter method he used also for the execution of any new project, which resulted in the creation of innumerable bureaus with no defined jurisdictional limits. He had no understanding of the confusion resulting from this situation. Another reason for his not using the extant administrative organization was that he believed that the greatest efficiency could be attained through interdepartmental competition. His only concern was to choose the most suitable man for each department. The chaotic situation thus fostered grew worse with the years, augmented by the increasing concentration of all power in Hitler. The cabinet became meaningless, and finally ceased to meet. Hitler looked upon all men as inferior to him, incapable of holding wide jurisdiction in any field. Therefore, there was no prime minister, and during Hitler's absences no high-policy decisions could be made.

o. Distrust of the Military

Hitler's distrust of the military caste may have originated in a virulent form when Blomberg, to whom he had entrusted the organization of the Wehrmacht, deserted him to marry an unadmirable woman. Then Beck had disagreed with him over the re-introduction of universal military service and solution of the Czech problem. When the war broke out in 1939, several generals predicted that the Polish campaign would be of long duration. It lasted eighteen days. In the West, Brauchitsch and Halder, following Schlieffen's plan, proposed a strong right flank, but Hitler decided on the breakthrough in the center which led to the extraordinarily rapid success in France. When the campaign in Russia did not end victoriously before the winter set in, the entire German Army was in danger of annihilation, and its preservation was due solely to Hitler's decisive order to hold the line. Hitler could not decide whether the military men were defective because of weakness of mind and character, lack of political insight, or lack of courage, but that they were defective Hitler was convinced by the experiences cited above. The series of catastrophes begun by Stalingrad Hitler blamed not on his orders, but on their faulty execution by his generals, and his distrust of them increased.

p. Ignorance of Foreigners

Another trait of Hitler's character was his inability to understand the character of other nations. His complete comprehension of the German spirit was matched by a complete unawareness of foreign spirits. Thus the propaganda which was so successful in Germany achieved a uniform failure outside of Germany. He had a sincere admiration for the English, but did not know that their intransigence in the Spring of 1939 was not bluff.

q. Kindness and Cruelty

The kindness which Hitler possessed contributed much to his great popularity. This kindness was apparent in his relations with children, in the care he took of his entourage and his visitors, and in his endeavors to please and pleasantly surprise people. He took a personal interest in the welfare of the family members of old comrades or soldiers

RESTRICTED

killed in action, and he was generous in aiding former adversaries when they were in difficulties. The former President of the Reichstag, Loebe, and Minister Severing, for instance, received monthly allotments which usually exceeded the amounts authorized in the budget. But this kindness, which often appeared suddenly and unexpectedly, could be replaced even more suddenly by fitful anger or terrifying severity. For example, no pardon was granted any man involved in the 20 July Putsch, even though in some cases clemency would have been appropriate. It was impossible to arouse in Hitler even a small measure of sympathy for the Jews, or to induce him to modify his solution of the Jewish question. There were domains in which he displayed a severity that was incomprehensible and pitiless. The explanation has been offered which claims that Hitler had a soft heart and a hard hand. Whenever he saw himself before an historic task that necessitated the display of the mail-clad fist, he had first to hide his own soft heart in impenetrable armor. This interpretation may be right. It seems to me that good and evil were present in his soul side by side. It was very difficult, even for men who knew him well, to predict which of the two would gain the upper hand in a given situation. The evil which is present in every human being as a germ and a potential threat acquires greater virulence in a man of genius and is ready at all times to erupt with violence. The evil genius became more and more powerful in Hitler as time went on. By 1939, after six years of autocratic rule, he exhibited all his worst traits: his inability to meet criticisms or objections, his lack of scruples in the choice of means, his tendency to think himself infallible, his contempt for other people, and his inclination to cruelty. The six years of war that followed also left their traces on him. The blows of fate did not loosen or soften him; they made him harder. What matter if he stooped, or if his trembling hands made him appear an old man? These things were not of importance. What was important was that the soul of this man -- whose memory and will had not yet failed -- had contracted and acquired the quality of hard rock. Distrust, even of his oldest companions, had won the upper hand. To his self-centered mind, it was the people's task to support the Fuehrer, not the Fuehrer's task to seek the welfare of the people; the people were destined to be victorious through him, or to go down with him in defeat.

For the Commanding Officer:

F. J. Trauttmansdorff
F.J. TRAUTTMANSDORFF
Capt AUS
Chief, OI Section

RESTRICTED